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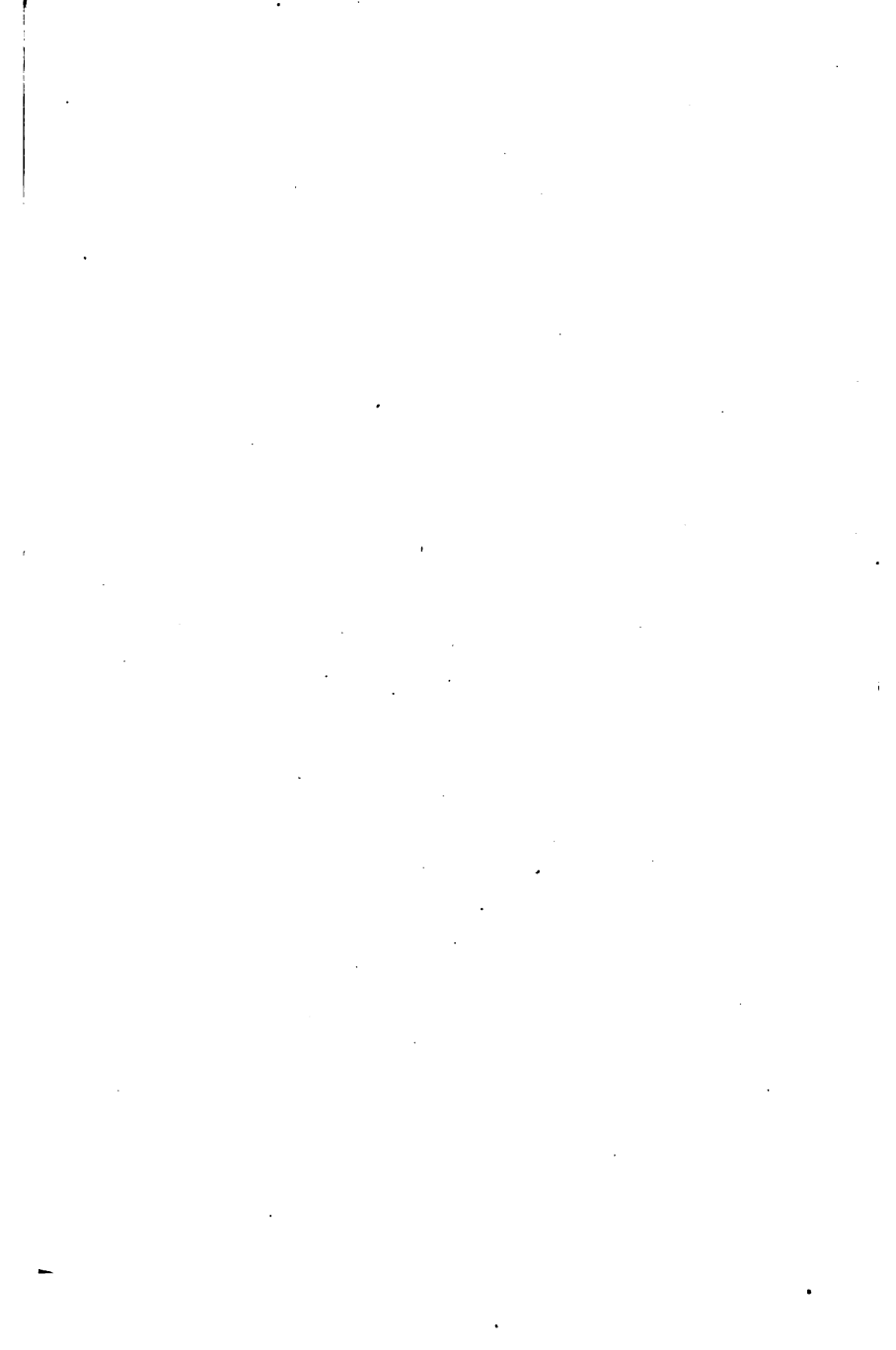
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1. Juvenile literature - Fiction,
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DICK LANGDON'S CAREER

IN

SATAN'S SCHOOLS, AND CHRIST'S
SCHOOLS.

BY

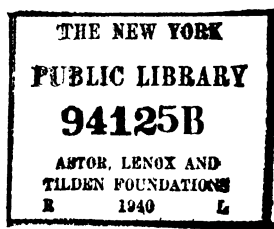
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AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,
PARK AVENUE AND FORTIETH STREET,
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PART I.

SATAN'S SCHOOLS.



DICK LANGDON'S CAREER.

CHAPTER I.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SCHOOLS.

ERNEST was a Christian. By this I mean that he loved Christ and endeavored to obey him.

This did not make him the less joyful in his play and recreation, and skating was his special delight. One fine winter afternoon he came home from the pond much earlier than usual, with his skates over his shoulder and his cheeks aglow with the healthful exercise. His mother, who was surprised to see him so early, and thought him less merry than usual, said,

“Have you had any trouble, Ernest?”

“No, mother; only I do n't like to attend such a swearing-school as is kept at the pond. I came away on that account.”

“A swearing-school!” exclaimed his mother.
“Who teaches it?”

"Oh, the bad boys. They are teaching the little ones to swear before they are old enough to know what the words mean. There was little Eddie Wilson, this afternoon; he was saying some bad words, and just as I was going to ask him not to, James Larkin spoke up and said,

" 'Can't you swear better than that, Ed?'

" 'No,' said Eddie; 'I can't swear very well as yet; but Dick Langdon's teaching me, and he can swear first-rate.'

"I got a chance to speak to Eddie out of hearing of the rest, and asked him if he did n't know it was wicked to use such words, and he said,

" 'No, I do n't think it's wicked. I think it's nice, because the big boys do so; and they give me candy and gum for saying like them.' "

"Does n't Eddie know the third commandment?"

"Yes, mother; I found he had learned it in the infant Sabbath-school class, but did n't seem to think it had anything to do with what he was saying; and he is so pleased with the idea of getting the dreadful words from the big boys that it is almost of no use to talk to him. That's the way the bad boys are all the time trying to make the little ones just like themselves."

"Yes," said the mother, "bad boys are very apt to set themselves to doing Satan's work—

which is to try to make others as sinful and miserable as they themselves are. I should say Satan was the principal of the swearing-school, and the wicked boys were his assistants."

Will my reader stop here for a few minutes' thought and answer the following questions?

Has Satan any schools in your town?

If so, where are they kept?

Who are the scholars?

What branches are taught?

Will that kind of education fit you for usefulness and happiness in time and in eternity?

If the first question, "Has Satan any schools in your town?" were put to me, I should say without hesitation that he has, and that it has never been my privilege to live in any place where he has not.

As to where these schools are kept, I answer, At the corners of the streets, at the stores and saloons, especially those where tobacco, beer, and intoxicating drinks are sold; at the livery-stables, the small workshops, the engine-houses, the schoolhouse yards; indeed, in every place where one can be found, old or young, who is willing to tempt and teach another to do wrong.

And this brings us to the questions, "Who are the teachers?" and "Who are the scholars?" I think Ernest's mother was right in saying that

Satan is the principal of this great school of sin and temptation, and that he is very glad to make every one, and especially every boy, who is ready to obey and imitate him, an assistant in his institution, which has been incorporated for the express purpose of fitting candidates for admission to his infernal kingdom. I hope the boys will realize that I speak very earnestly and solemnly of Satan, his work, his wages, and his abode of endless despair. Though it is a terrible truth, we cannot doubt what the Bible teaches, that there is a personal devil who, "as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour," making it his special work to tempt to sin for the express purpose of bringing its fearful punishment upon all whom he can win to himself. So, when children have angry, envious, and revengeful feelings; when they have a desire to be disobedient and disrespectful to their parents and teachers, to lie, steal, break the Sabbath, or do anything which God has forbidden, very likely it is Satan who, all unseen, is influencing their minds and tempting them to this evil. But Satan cannot get on as fast as he desires in his bad work by simply influencing the minds of young people by his own suggestions and those of his invisible servants; so he puts it into the heart of every boy whom he gets fairly won over to his

side to turn tempter, like himself, and see how many others he can make equally bad. Thus every one who will go with those who do evil, and will learn to be like them, becomes a scholar in this terrible school of sin.

Now I have told you what I mean by Satan's schools, where I think they are kept, and who are the teachers and who are the scholars.

The next question was about the branches taught. Can you tell me what the first bad lesson was which Satan ever learned or taught? It begins with "D," and I think you will easily guess it. It is the primary study in all his schools. You may be sure Satan thinks it very important to get the children well started in this branch at an early age; for he goes into every family, giving private lessons to the youngest members, and, unless you have a very little babe at your house, I fear every one of you has already made some progress in this study.

CHAPTER II.

DISOBEDIENCE.

I DARE say the boys did not find it very hard to guess that the first lesson in sin which Satan ever learned or taught was disobedience. If he had not disobeyed God he would now be an angel in heaven instead of an inhabitant of hell. The Bible gives us reason to think that, just as soon as Satan disobeyed God, he began to teach the terrible lesson to others; for we know that he became the leader of a host of disobedient angels who for sin were eternally banished from heaven.

Dick Langdon, who has been mentioned as teaching the little boys to swear, had learned the lesson of disobedience in his infancy, when his fond young mother, almost overwhelmed with sorrow and care, had let him do as he pleased, and his intemperate father had either neglected or abused him.

Disobedience came very naturally to Dick, who had a strong will of his own and fine powers for good or evil. The boys may all be very sure that the highest and best faculties will be well appreciated and sought for in the schools of evil,

and that what you usually call smartness will prove no protection from bad influences.

Dick's father was naturally gifted, and had taken a high stand as a scholar when a boy and afterwards in his business relations. At this period of his life he married a beautiful girl of great culture and refinement, who had never known hardship and whom any man might have been proud to love and cherish. He doubtless meant to make her happy, but habits of evil formed in boyhood, and held in control while he won his fair bride, returned upon him even in the first year after his marriage, and grew upon him until they mastered and ruined him.

When my story opens he was a confirmed drunkard, prematurely old at thirty-five years of actual age, and the heaviest of griefs and burdens to his suffering family.

Dick loved his youthful and gifted mother, and he was to her the very heart of every hope and joy that lingered in her desolate life. It was very hard for her to believe evil of him; indeed, she would not; she shut her eyes to his wrong ways and to the dangers which beset him. She compelled herself to think that her large-hearted, talented boy could not, with his father's fearful example before his eyes, be foolish enough to choose a course of recklessness. As to any con-

trol or authority over him, she had never attempted it. Disobedience to her, allowed to pass unpunished, had been his first downward step.

He did a great many things to please his mother, and he thought it was well for boys to love their mothers; but as to obeying them, he scorned the very mention of it. Having become one of Satan's assistants, he was continually teaching other boys lessons of disobedience and insubordination, especially to any woman who was in a place of authority over them.

Perhaps I cannot better tell you how far Dick had already got in the way of evil, and in so doing warn you against the sin of disobedience, than by telling you how he had been behaving at school and with what results.

The principal thing which had kept Dick from going down hill faster than he had was that he attended an excellent public grammar-school. He was a quick, bright scholar, with a natural thirst for knowledge, which his mother took every possible means to stimulate; and by exciting his ambition and by perpetual coaxing she kept his attendance tolerably regular. She denied herself almost necessary food and clothing, and toiled with her needle by night, to keep him respectably clothed for his school, and was pleased that he never seemed to care how ragged a suit he put on.

Saturdays and out of school hours, because he would give her a kiss when he had donned the worst clothes he possessed, saying,

"It saves your spoiling your fine eyes nights, pretty mamma, and I'm not a bit ashamed of rags."

Then his mother would view admiringly the face and figure of her boy, thinking,

"He is handsome even in rags! Oh, what a treasure my Dick is!" She little imagined that, while he really did like to save the eyes of his "pretty mamma," he was getting almost to take pride in rags, because he associated out of school with a set of bad boys who wore them and who regarded him as a sort of hero and leader.

The school was under such good discipline that the ill-disposed boys found it very difficult to do the mischief they would, and they admired Dick for his boldness and ingenuity in finding a way.

Instant obedience was a rule of the school which no one dared violate. But Dick abhorred the rule, and one day Satan whispered to him in the recitation-room to try not doing as he was told by Miss Barnard, one of the assistant teachers. He seldom did anything by halves, and made the daring experiment of sitting still in his seat when told to put a sum on the blackboard. The teacher

did not compel obedience, and very unwisely let the act pass without reporting him to the principal for discipline, fearing that if she did she might be blamed for lack of authority over her pupils.

"Now, fellows," said Dick the next day at recess, "just you see what jolly times we'll have in that room. Miss Barnard do n't dare to report us."

"I would n't dare to do what you done," said one of the boys.

"Where's your grammar?" replied Dick.

"In my desk. Why, what of it?"

"Nothing, only use it occasionally," said Dick, and there was a general laugh in his favor.

"Boys," continued Dick, "of course I would not get you into trouble, and there is no need of your doing anything that will. I only did what I did to see what would be done, and nothing was done. So you see if what I did can be done, there's no risk in what I'd ask to have done."

"What shall be done? We'll do it," said a special follower of Dick.

"Well, I'll tell you what we'll do. You know those long settees in the recitation-room, made of oak and iron, are very heavy, which is the reason they keep in place; but we can move them. When we file in to recite, the first fellow

that gets to a settee just put your knee to it with all your strength and push the end of it snug up against the one back of it. It'll be an accident, of course, and the rest of those that belong in that settee can't get in if they would, and how will those innocently coming on get by? It'll be a sort of mixed scene, and who's to tell who whispers and who laughs and who whistles and who would like to be good if he only could? How's that purring pussy-cat, Miss Barnard, going to get any recitation at all out of us? It'll be jolly! I'm in a hurry to try it on."

"We'll do it!" chorused the boys.

They did it, with the very results which Dick had predicted; and having done that, they proceeded to do so many ingeniously annoying bad things of Dick's planning that I must leave them all to be imagined. The result was that Miss Barnard resigned her situation and left in the middle of a term, before another teacher had been secured to fill the vacancy.

The principal and the remaining teachers took turns in hearing that division, and, advised by Dick, they behaved beautifully. He even went so far as to say to the principal one day out of school hours,

"We boys miss Miss Barnard badly. We loved her, sir. Isn't she coming back?"

Not another boy in school would have ventured to speak so; but Dick was fearless.

It was not long before the new assistant arrived. She had left her home and come a long journey to fill what she supposed to be a very desirable situation in one of the most orderly of schools.

When she came into the great hall and saw the boys all seated in perfect order, industriously studying, with the room so still that she could hear the ticking of the clock, her heart leaped for joy, for she knew that in that room obedience reigned. She went into the library, which was a small room directly back of the teacher's platform and desk, and left the scholars as she had found them, without a teacher; for all the assistants were hearing lessons in the recitation-rooms, and the principal, who was out, had told her that the scholars in the hall did just as well when he was absent as when he was there. She could watch the school unseen from the library, and she found he was right; there was perfect order.

By-and-by the principal came in and called upon a certain division of the school to rise, and introduced to them their new teacher, and she went away with them into a recitation-room adjoining the hall. It was Dick's division, which, at his instigation, had its plans all laid to have what they called "a jolly old time" at the very

beginning of the new administration; for, they said, "She'll never dare to tell she could n't keep order the first minute, and of course she can't keep order if we wont come to order."

She stood at the desk all ready to make a pretty little speech, saying what good boys they were and what a delightful time she expected to have instructing them, when, the door having been silently closed, she found herself in a scene of the wildest confusion. More discordant sounds than there were boys in the room startled her ears—buzzing, whispering, talking, muttering, sighing, groaning, humming, singing, whistling, scraping, shuffling, rapping, and more other *ings* than you can imagine. The scene was indescribable; it was all in the line of mischief and confusion which the inventive genius of more than a score of boys could make it.

The new teacher, who stood at the desk, was a very young and very little lady, "Not out of her teens, and has n't got her growth yet," so the boys whispered. "Any one of us could pitch her out of the window quicker than you could say *scat*." She could n't hear herself speak for the tumult; she did n't know one scholar from another, even by sight; her cheeks glowed, not with anger, but with the grief and disappointment of this cruel reception; and she felt more like laying

her head down upon the desk and having a hearty cry than like accepting the challenge to battle. Don't you think, my reader, that the boys behaved shamefully and deserved to be severely punished? Don't you pity the teacher? What could she do? What do you think she *did* do? I must wait till the next chapter to finish the story; but I will tell you now that she did something better than crying, and something that brought the room to order in a twinkling.

The teacher knew without being told, the instant the door closed and the uproar began, that her particular division had had a poor teacher, who had not enforced obedience, and thus had let Satan into her recitation-room to usurp her place and keep a school of his own liking.

CHAPTER III.

DECEIT.

THE ugly black wall which separated the recitation-room from the hall was deceit. The new teacher saw it instantly, saw that it had been built there to hide the wrong-doing from the eyes of the good principal, who ought to know it all, and she threw the wall down with one stroke of her little hand. It was useless to speak (as I before said, she could not even hear herself in such a Babel), so she just turned the knob of the recitation-room door and threw it wide open into the hall. Then she stepped silently back to her desk, and it was not ten seconds before every scholar was in his seat and the room was so still you could have heard a pin fall; only nobody would have ventured to drop one. The teacher did not make any speech. She thought, "‘Actions speak louder than words.’ I think the boys understand me." So she went pleasantly from one to another, taking each one's name, looking him steadily in the eye as she did so; thus many eyes fell before her gaze, and I am happy to say that Dick's were of the number. Then she threw her whole power

into the recitation, and made it so interesting that, when the bell rang for its close, Dick thought, "Can we have been here a whole hour?"

It was recess now, and as the boys went out they whispered one to another, "We sha' n't have any more goings on in No. 10 without Mr. B—— knowing it."

When the boys were all gone from the recitation-room the principal came in, and the teacher said, with a painful blush, "You saw, sir, I was obliged to open my door to bring the boys to order. There was a perfect riot till I did it."

"And afterwards?" questioned Mr. B——.

"There was order and attention to the recitation. The boys are bright and easily interested. I think they will behave well, too, if there is an open door between you and me. You will allow that, I trust."

"Certainly," replied the principal. "Your predecessor shut the door, which should ever have been open, by trying to hide from me the bad conduct of the boys in that class; but it became public, and she was dismissed from her charge. If she had been sincere, she would have found no trouble. 'Honor and right keep open doors,' and I thank you for opening the one which she closed. Every one of those boys must make you a public apology or leave the school."

"Thank you, but leave them to me for a little. I hope they will apologize without compulsion."

When the boys came in for a recitation after recess they left the door open as requested and took their seats in perfect order. When they had done so, the teacher said very gently,

"My boys, how many of you think you did right when you came in here with me the first time? How many think it was an honorable and kind reception? Hands up, those who think so."

If Dick had raised his hand several others would have done the same, without half realizing what the act said; but he realized, and kept his hand and his eyes too down, and no hands went up.

"How many of you are ready to say to me, 'I beg your pardon'?"

Dick's hand is up instantly; the scholars glance questioningly at him and one another; a few hands rise, then more and more, till all are up.

"You may say it then in concert, three times, to make sure of a full chorus, and speak up loud and let Mr. B—— hear you, for we will have no secrets from him."

The teacher raised her hand for a signal, and the boys brought it out in fine chorus:

"I beg your pardon; *I beg your pardon*; I BEG YOUR PARDON."

"Well said, boys," spoke Mr. B——, appearing at the open door. "How many will give this lady reason to say to me to-night, 'The boys do just as well when the recitation-room door is closed as when it is open'? Those who will, say 'I.'"

A full chorus of "I's" responded.

"Well, then, we will close this door," said the teacher, as Mr. B—— turned away. "'T is all the same to us, closed or open, since there is to be no wall of deceit here."

Results proved that Satan beat a hasty retreat just at that time from that room; he never likes to keep school in any place that is n't well shut up from all good by the black wall of deceit.

Dick, who was naturally brave and had been trained by his mother to be courteous, felt very much ashamed of himself for advising the boys to give a stranger such a reception, and with the frankness which was also one of his traits he told them he should "cut up somewhere else, not in No. 10." He really did better at school than anywhere else, but it was only his mind which was taught. The Bible was a book not studied or even read, and as it was a public school, all religious instruction was by law practically forbidden.

CHAPTER IV.

SABBATH-BREAKING.

DICK was a confirmed Sabbath-breaker long before he became established in some of the other sins which Satan delights to teach. His mother, who had been brought up to respect the day and to attend public worship, had always accompanied her husband to church as long as she could induce him to go; but when this was impossible she timidly shrank from public notice of any kind, and after the necessity of remaining at home with her babes was over, never overcame the many obstacles which prevented her attendance. Had the love of Christ dwelt in her heart, she might have done otherwise and constrained Dick to remember the Sabbath. As it was, while his mother gave respectful observance to the day at home, and advised and wished him to go to church and Sabbath-school, he never complied with her wishes, and spent the day as he pleased. He never let his mother know how badly he spent it. Really he learned and did and taught more evil on that day than on any other of the week.

Satan had succeeded in instilling into Dick a

great contempt for religious instruction in every form, and he did not hesitate to act as his assistant in teaching the same lesson to others and in luring them from all sacred influences. He had taken a great fancy to a bright, affectionate, well-disposed boy named Willy Goodwin, who was younger than himself and a near neighbor. We will step into Willy's home on a certain Sabbath which proved a sadly-eventful one in his history, for you will soon see that in doing so I am by no means neglecting to tell you of Dick.

"I must start for Sabbath-school very early," said Willy to his sister Martha; "for the 'juvenile choir' is to sing half an hour before school, and my teacher says they can't spare me."

"You will be the only one of the family at church," said kind sister Martha, as she brushed her brother's soft hair and buttoned his clean collar; "for father is out of town and mother is sick, and I must stay with her. But you'll be a good boy if you are all alone, wont you, Willy?"

"Yes, indeed," replied Willy confidently. But at the very first corner he passed he came upon one of Satan's schools, attended by a company of Sabbath-breakers headed by Dick, who, on seeing Willy, instantly called out to him,

"Halloa, Will! can you speak to a fellow of a

Sabba'-day morning, or would n't your mammy approve of it?"

"Good-morning, Dick. What are you up to here?" said Willy, pausing to answer, when he knew it would be better to pass on in silence.

"We're up to 'snuff,' sweet-scented 'snuff' too," replied Dick. "We're off for old Gruffy's meadow to 'hook' strawberries; the ground's red with them. Better go with us, Will. No need of Sunday-schools and meeting-houses such a splendid day as this, when a pious boy like you can find 'books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything,' as I heard my school-marm remark. Come, what say, little Methodist?"

"Oh, I can't go," replied Willy in a wavering tone, allowing his mind to dwell upon the thought of the first ripe strawberries, the "splendid day," and the fact that none of his folks would know whether he went to meeting or not.

"Oh, yes, you can go too; and, what's more, you shall!" cried the boys, surrounding Willy. "Now Dick has blabbed to you, we'll take you along any way, so that you need n't be sending a committee of deacons after us."

Now Willy knew that they could not compel him to go; but he made an excuse of their threat

to walk along with them, saying, "Well, I will go on a piece with you any way, just to show that I am not mean enough to tell of you."

"You are more of a man than I took you for," cried Dick, clapping him on the back. "I say, you pick into my basket and I will sell your berries for you to-morrow with mine, and give you half of all I get. They will bring a tip-top price, I tell you, they are so early!"

There is not room to relate all that took place; but Willy was absent from Sabbath-school and from meeting, and got home about noon, with his face very hot and red and his light pants badly stained with strawberries. Martha was in her mother's darkened room, and Willy crept up stairs and changed his pants unnoticed. That afternoon he stayed at home and waited upon his mother, so that Martha could go to church.

The boys had found a good many berries, and on Monday Dick handed Willy twenty-five cents as his share of the pay, saying,

"You see, Will, my man, this business pays better than that old Sunday-school." The fact was that because Dick had taken a fancy to bright, active little Will he was sparing no pains to draw him into his own wicked set.

"How came you to be so rich, my son?" said Willy's father cheerfully, as he happened to pass

the window where he stood counting over his little pile of five-cent pieces.

Willy started, blushed, and at last managed to stammer,

"I earned it, father, picking wild strawberries."

"That is well, my boy," replied his father. "I like to have you earn money for yourself, that you may know its value. Here is twenty-five cents more to go with it for your encouragement; only try and make a good use of it;" and Willy's father hurried away, thinking, "Now my little boy is glad." But his father's kindness made Willy feel very miserable.

It was rather strange, and very unfortunate, that Willy's evil doings were not found out at his home that week; but he had several hair-breadth escapes, and used a great deal of deceit to avoid exposure. His mother asked how the pants were so stained, and he covered the truth with a lie. Then his Sabbath-school teacher called, and seeing Willy first alone, inquired the cause of his absence from his class. And he said, "My mother was sick last Sabbath, and I stayed at home to wait upon her." When his mother came in the teacher said she was glad to find that Willy had stayed at home last Sabbath to help her when sick. Then his mother stroked his hair lovingly

as she said, thinking of the afternoon, "Yes, he was a dear boy, and such a comfort that he got me almost well before sunset." And the loving touch of his mother's soft hand made Willy very miserable.

As the days and nights went by Willy grew more and more wretched thinking of his hidden sin, till at last conscience, God's voice in his heart, smote him so terribly that he almost arose in the dead of the night to go through the darkness to his father's bedside and wake him to hear the full confession of his sin. How fondly would his father have folded his son to his heart, forgiving him all!

But Willy smothered the voice of conscience with the excuse that he ought not to disturb his father's rest, and that the morning would be soon enough, when really he knew that, unless he were awake and arose long before his usual time, his father would be gone to the city. Late in the night he got to sleep, and did not awake till Martha called him two hours after his father left.

Willy proved the truth of the familiar lines,

" 'Almost' cannot avail ;
'Almost' is but to fail ;"

for when we do n't obey the voice of conscience she soon stops speaking, and it becomes comparatively easy to do wrong. The first steps in sin are

usually little steps, and Willy's looks like a great one; but we must remember that Willy's "first step" was only the error of pausing to answer Dick when he stopped him so improperly on his way to Sabbath-school; and if you will read over the account of what followed you will see that the steps were not so very long.

Dick showed Willy a good deal of attention, which flattered his pride, because Dick was older and a kind of leader among the boys, and he soon made Willy begin to feel ashamed of goodness. Oh, that is a sad step downward, a long stride towards destruction!

"He'd be a nice fellow, would Will, if he was n't so goody, would n't he, boys?" asked Dick of the others in his set; and they answered,

"I do n't know. I guess he can't be anything but goody; can you, Will?"

"Bet I could if I tried," answered poor tempted Willy. "Was n't I kind of bad without trying that Sunday I went hooking strawberries?"

Both Dick and Willy knew how to speak in very good English, but both of them when companying with "rowdies" tried to talk like them, and Dick was getting accustomed to it.

"Yes, yes, that you was," cried the boys; and Dick put in,

"I tell you he knows the way to be something besides goody. Why, he's that cute to his ma and the Sunday-school marm that one of 'em thinks he was at home and t' other thinks he was at meeting, and his pa praised him for earning the money and gave him some more to encourage him!"

"Bully for you, Will! What are you going ter do with the money?" asked one.

Willy hesitated about replying to this question. He had hidden the silver away out of sight, because it made him so wretched to look at it. He had as yet no bad uses for money, and he had lain awake at night thinking whether he should feel any better if he gave that money away in benevolence.

"Bet a dollar he's thinkin' of sendin' of it to convert the heathen," cried one of the boys.

Willy had thought of it, but was about to deny the charge when Dick saved him the falsehood by saying,

"Safe bettin' dollars when you ha' n't got a dollar to bet, nor nobody else one to bet with. Will's keepin' his half a dollar so that he can bet; eh, Will?"

"I'll bet half of 'it that I wont send t' other half to the heathen," answered Willy. Then the boys applauded, and Dick whispered to him,

"I'll tell you, Will, what I'd do with it if 't was mine. I'd—"

"No whisperin'; talk out," cried a great fellow bigger than Dick, pushing himself between the speakers, almost overturning Willy.

Dick at once gave the big boy battle, coming off as usual triumphant in the fight. Willy wondered what Dick would do with the money if it were his. He did not have a chance to ask him then, but a few days later Dick told him in actions which "speak louder than words," and which will be given to the reader in the next chapter.

Willy was not happy with this set of bad boys, but he thought he was still more wretched at home, where his concealed wrong-doing was continually haunting him. His mother was confined to her room by sickness, his sister overwhelmed with work, and his father away from home much of the time on a business which took him to the neighboring seaport. Thus Willy was left much to himself at a time when he needed a great deal of help.

His good friend conscience made several hard efforts to get a hearing, but Satan was there too with his bad advice. He made Willy think it would almost kill his poor sick mother to know how wicked her dear boy had been, and that his

tired, overburdened father had trouble enough when he came home, on account of sickness and poverty, without his bringing to light his own bad conduct. So he added the greatest sorrow of all to those which his parents were bearing cheerfully, by forsaking the ways of pleasantness and peace for those of sin and sorrow.

Sabbath-breaking is a sin which never is practised alone, but brings a host of others in its train; and Dick little realized when he acted as Satan's assistant in tempting Willy away from Sunday-school and church what grief and shame he was bringing to that happy household.

Willy became much attached to Dick, and followed him into evil which was represented to him to be good, until he began to lose the keen sense of wrong-doing which had attended his first acts, and the things which are lovely and of good report began to lose for him their charms.

Willy will appear again in the course of Dick's history, but at this point he drops out of it, because the family removed to the city, where the invalid wife and mother would not be so much separated from her husband.

CHAPTER V.

PRODIGALITY.

ERNEST was crossing the bridge one Saturday afternoon. At the same time a gentleman mounted upon a fine black horse came rapidly upon the bridge from the opposite direction. A strong wind was blowing, which very uncereemoniously lifted the light straw hat from the gentleman's head and wafted it away down stream, landing it, however, upon the shore behind him. Ernest began to run in pursuit of the hat, but paused in a moment as Dick, who was nearer the hat, being on that side of the bridge, called out in cheerful tones,

"Halloa, mister! Hold on, and I'll get your hat."

Dick, who seldom failed in anything he undertook, soon recovered the hat and brought it in triumph to the owner, who had reined in his high-spirited horse and awaited him upon the bridge. Dick seemed in great danger of losing a part, at least, of his own palm-leaf hat as he came upon the bridge facing the breeze, for the brim was so nearly torn off that it only hung to

the body of the hat by a few frail shreds; and as the gentlemen viewed Dick, with his flashing eyes, glowing cheeks, rags, and tatters, he said, while his hand sought his pocket,

"Thank you, my boy! Upon my word, you are a fine study for either a painter or a philanthropist!" So saying, he put a silver coin into Dick's hand and rode rapidly away.

"How much has he given you, Dick? How much? how much?" shouted the boys at the corner, all running together and crowding round their favorite and leader.

"A quarter!" cried Dick, showing the money.

"No, 't a'n't neither, boys, I declare; it's a half-dollar—a whole half-dollar; three cheers for a whole half-dollar!" and Dick, wild with delight, plucked at his dilapidated hat to aid in giving the cheers. Alas! the two departments of the concern, which barely hung together before, now parted company entirely, leaving the hat proper sticking fast to its owner's curly head, and the brim, its broken straws bristling savagely, in Dick's excited grasp.

"Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah!" shouted he, brandishing the hat-brim high in the air, undaunted by peals of laughter from the bystanders. "Hurrah for a whole half-dollar! Now I'm rich enough to treat you all. Come, Ernest, you

shall go too, though you did refuse to go with us to-day; for you're a good fellow, after all; come!" Ernest, who was quietly walking home upon the sidewalk, answered cheerfully,

"No, thank you, Dick. A good supper at home is the best 'treat.' Come now, Dick, don't waste your precious half-dollar at that store. Come down here with me to Nelson's and get you a new hat; they have some nice straw hats for fifty cents.

"Hurrah, boys! is n't that a good one?" shouted merry Dick, again brandishing the hat-brim. "Just as if my hat was n't a perfect beauty," taking off the hat proper, holding it up to be admired, and then putting it back upon his head with an emphatic thump upon the top. "We'll have something to eat better than straw out of our fifty cents, boys; wont we though?"

So while Ernest walked quietly home, the troop of boys went to the corner store, where Dick treated them to candy and nuts; and while they were busy eating, he slipped into the back store and with the remaining pence bought for himself a glass of beer.

"Ah!" say some of my bright young readers, "intemperance is the subject of this chapter!"

No, my boys; I did not mean to write about that now, but about something that is pretty sure

to lead to it; and that is *prodigality*. Is prodigality a word which some of you hardly understand? Then I must tell you that it means waste, especially the waste of money; and that is a lesson which is speedily learned in these street schools. Show me a boy who has kept twenty-five cents of his own in his pocket a month, reserved for some good use, to buy a new book or garment, a present for a friend, to send books, bread, or clothing to the destitute, or to add to his own little fund in the savings-bank, invested to insure the means of education or a start in business, and he will be a boy who does not attend Satan's schools and who is likely to prosper. On the other hand, a boy in whose pocket a penny burns until it is spent for candy, cake, or peanuts is the one whose money is likely soon to go for tobacco and strong drink, and who is surely on the straight road to poverty, be his father ever so wealthy.

Shall I tell you about a prodigal I once knew? His father was rich and honored; the son's prodigality was deemed no unpardonable sin. As a boy he made a great show of spending lavishly, and, as he falsely called it, generously, all the money he could get. He acted, on a large scale very much as Dick did with his half-dollar. As he grew up he was called by careless

observers a good-natured, whole-hearted, liberal fellow; rather wasteful, to be sure; wild, too, and fond of a high time, but likely to sober down into a worthy and generous manhood when he had "sown his wild oats" and become settled in life. So thought pretty Rose, the refined, cultured, and cherished one who consented to become his bride. Woe to her that she did not remember what a bitter harvest springs from the sowing of wild oats! She died young, of a broken heart, and their only son and only daughter were soon laid beside her. When, in my schooldays, I went botanizing, I used to pause by their family burying-place, long since passed into the hands of strangers, and sadly read the inscriptions on the tasteful marble monuments of the mother and children. The husband and father I knew then, for he lived in our village, a destitute, vicious, and prematurely old man, boarding himself in a miserable room over a grocery. The last relic of his liberal prodigality was displayed in keeping a lean old horse, hungry like himself, which he always lent, gracefully declining compensation, to any of the boys or girls who coaxed him. At last the horse died a very natural death, and his master seemed in a fair way to follow him. Sometimes the man went hungry, sometimes he walked into our houses at meal-times, thus silently

begging an invitation to eat with the family; and sometimes he was fed with the baskets of cold provisions which charity often set in the entry beside his door. But his constitution was broken by vice, and the miserable sufferer was soon carried to the poorhouse, where he used to console himself with the remark, "The town owes me a living; I've given away enough in my better days to support me to a good old age." Had his money been wisely given for the public good, his consolation might have been well-founded, but alas! there was no one to say, "Your lavished wealth has blessed me." So at last, after lingering years of misery, he died a pauper's death, and, how much worse, the death of a hardened sinner! His last breath was a curse. By sufferance of the owner of the land, they made his grave beside the graves of his wife and children, but no stone will ever mark it. This sad story is literally true. Another, as true and of the same nature, comes to my mind, which is quite as sad, only—. But I will tell you.

John Hendrick was prodigal, and had a right to be, if culture, wealth, social standing, and a long line of honored ancestry could make that right which is always wrong. Laughably prodigal as a boy, he became foolishly prodigal as a man. How loftily he left his change upon the counter!

how wantonly sunk his silver dollars in the water, skipping them for sport, as others did stones upon the surface of the river! How recklessly he bought and sold elegant equipages! how lavishly expended in all directions, without a thought of incomes! By-and-by friends warned him that even his estate would never bear it. He only laughed in derision. Was he not Judge Hendrick's grandson? Were not his estate and reputation inexhaustible? But one day he opened his eyes to the fact that he had spent his last dollar. His wife had property, which he had never touched: that went next. By that time the generous man was desperate: he must have money to waste! He managed to get his sister's estate into his hands, and that also vanished. The wife is dead now: the brother and sister live. He has repented towards God and man; but even the mercy of God cannot avert in this life the natural consequences of his sin. A few years ago they were supported by an allowance from a distant relative. It became insufficient to pay the board of both, and the brother, too feeble to earn anything, and deeply sensible of the injustice he had done his now aged sister, divided to her nearly all the allowance, and moving into that same miserable room over the store, slept upon the floor, and ate oftentimes the bread of charity.

These true stories are sad: let me tell you a cheerful one of two bright little boys whose parents were not rich. These boys were generous, yet quite the opposite of prodigal. Other children with whom they associated wondered how it was they always had money of their own in one pocket, and "family money" in the other: why the contribution box never passed them unheeded, and they were always prepared to do the handsome thing. They made purchases for their father's family, taking money from the common purse and returning the balance uncounted except by themselves, because they could be fully trusted not to spend the family money as their own. Their own money, saved or earned by themselves, they managed on their own account, buying and giving according to their own judgment. Men observing that they could be trusted, desired their services where other boys had proved unfaithful, paying them liberally because uncounted funds were safe in their hands. This was when they were lads from ten to seventeen. James, the younger, bought his piano with his own money when boys and girls of wealthier families were only longing for one, and William went directly from the high school to college, at seventeen, saying he had enough of his own for at least one year, and if anything should occur to prevent his parents from

giving or lending him the rest for his college course, he would stop and earn it. Those boys began right. They were taught both the worth and the worthlessness of money before they were old enough to write the word prodigality; and they not only heard, but learned, the lessons taught. For an example of the lessons, when they received their first half-dimes and dimes they were told that money was valueless except for what it would get; that it was good to buy plenty of nourishing food—that was what their father did with his—but theirs would be worse than lost in buying things to eat between meals, when they had all they needed at their own home. It would be well spent in buying something to eat for any one who was hungry. Heeding this lesson, they never longed for the dainties which they saw displayed on the streets, and in the stores, never seeming to associate them with the idea of a good time. They did not feel that they must get rid of money just as soon as they had it, but reserved it until a real use presented. Each had his bank-book early in childhood, becoming an intelligent capitalist before he learned his alphabet. Each learned also to be truly generous, by giving wisely of his own money, the value of which he realized.

You all know the sin of “the prodigal son”

was in part that he "wasted his substance." Be careful of your money, boys. Don't hoard it like misers, just to have and keep, but save it for a good purpose, or use it wisely in some way that will do real good to yourselves or others.

Do not think that my story is wandering too far from Dick. He had but fifty cents to waste, and I feared you would think that a small matter, and fail to learn from it the lesson this chapter should teach; so I have stopped to show you how it was with those who had fifty thousand dollars, instead of fifty cents, with which to be prodigal. Now we will return to our hero's history, and follow it more closely than heretofore, since by this time my readers must be fully aware that it is given not simply to entertain, but to warn you against his sins, and to inspire you to a noble Christian life.

CHAPTER VI.

SMOKING.

"That Indian weed
Of which the Devil sowed the seed."

WE left Dick drinking his glass of beer in the back shop. When he set down the tumbler without having quite emptied it, one of Satan's assistants, who sat there smoking, said,

"Dick, you did n't drink that as if you half enjoyed it. You needed a cigar first to make it relish. Here is one for you now, my boy; only let me see you use it."

"Thank you, I do n't smoke," said Dick doggedly. He hated the very sight and smell, to say nothing of the taste, of tobacco; but was ashamed to own it there.

"Never'll be a man till you do," retorted the smoker, proceeding to light the cigar from his own; adding, as he once more held it out to Dick,

"Here, now smoke this like a gentleman, and begin to be somebody."

Dick thought the ringleader of all the best fellows in school ought "to be somebody;" so he put the thing which he actually loathed be-

tween his lips, and began to puff away as much like an adept as possible. But although he had often tried to prepare himself for this ordeal by smoking moss, sweet-fern, catnip, and even a little tobacco in his father's pipe, still his stomach rebelled; and he found himself so sick and dizzy as to compel a hasty retreat to the open air. The boys, who were just finishing their peanuts, greeted him with a shout.

"Halloo, Dick! got a cigar? Give us a whiff, that's you;" and three or four hands were at once outstretched for the cigar.

Dick surrendered it gladly, and following where the rest led, soon found himself seated with the boys on some waste boards in the cellar of the new church, in the upper part of which the carpenters were yet busy.

"Now we can smoke it all round," said Dick; "so those who don't know how may learn; and if a fellow happens to be sick there is nobody to see or poke fun at him."

So the cigar went from mouth to mouth, while brains grew giddy, eyes dim, and stomachs sick; but I spare you a description of the disgusting scene.

Meanwhile, Ernest was stopped on his way home from school as he was passing a poor tenement on a back street, by Dick's mother, who

was holding a fretful child two or three years old, and who came to the door, inquiring,

"Ernest, have you seen my Dick since school?"

"Yes'm, I have," replied Ernest briefly, embarrassed by a doubt as to whether he ought to speak of Dick's bad ways to his mother.

"Where was he?" asked the mother anxiously.

"At L——'s, the corner store," replied Ernest.

The mother turned a shade paler and sat down as if stricken, upon the door-sill; for at that shop her husband bought the tobacco and rum which made the whole family so miserable.

"O Ernest!" she cried in a tone of anguish, "tell me truly what my boy goes there for."

"Indeed, I hope he does not go for much harm," replied Ernest. "He only went this afternoon, to buy a treat for the boys with fifty cents which a man gave him for running after his hat; and he invited me to go too; but I could n't stop. I saw them eating only candy and peanuts as I passed."

"Baby want candy too; baby want Dick come 'ome. Dick p'omised come 'ome; p'omised bring candy too." Thus the baby spoke for herself; and the mother added,

"Yes; Dick promised to come directly from school to take care of the baby. She is teething, and feverish, and wears me out so; besides that, the work is all undone." And the mother rose to go in with an air of utter discouragement and exhaustion.

"I'll run right back and see if I can't find Dick," said Ernest. "And here, baby; I'll give you this pretty alley," taking a brightly-colored glass ball from his pocket, "if you will sit on the bed and play with it till I come back, and then I will bring you a great yellow orange."

Baby grasped the wonderful ball, and sat contentedly upon the hard bed; while the mother, relieved from the exhausting weight of the child, began to speak the thanks which Ernest did not stop to hear. His search for Dick was in vain; for he never thought of looking in the cellar of the church, where you know he was hidden away with the cigar.

Ernest, who was never prodigal of his cents, but always kept them for a good use, bought the biggest orange he could find for baby, and felt repaid tenfold by her delight, as hugging it first to her little bosom, and then sucking the refreshing juice, she went to sleep upon the bed with the orange still at her lips.

Ernest now went home as quickly as possible.

and having told his mother all that had passed, got her permission to go to Dick's home after supper with a present of a basket of nice apples. He found Dick's mother in such anxiety about her boy, who had not yet returned, that he once more set out in pursuit of him. But again his search was a fruitless one; for, although he did go to the church, he found it fast locked, the workmen having all left for the night. The fact was, when the carpenters had finished their day's work, they locked all the doors before leaving, and among them the door to the cellar, where the boys still were, sick from the effect of the cigar.

And there they were left all night! Do you suppose the sickness and weariness, the hunger and cold of their imprisonment, made Dick and his companions think of the evils of tobacco, or resolve to forsake its use? Oh, no! They only thought they were foolish to get locked in. Boys who get together by themselves to learn to smoke are apt to succeed in spite of difficulties; and the poison which nature at first makes them abhor soon becomes to them sweet as "honey-dew," which is one of the names given to tobacco by Satan's assistants. It is truly wonderful how soon even a little child can learn to like this herb, from which every living thing naturally turns with disgust.

I once knew a little boy, three years old, bright, pretty, healthy, altogether as fine a boy as heart could wish. I knew him a year later, thin, pale, spiritless, fearfully diseased in body and mind.

"What is the matter with little Benny?" said I to his mother.

"I don't know," was her reply; "he is getting all run down, and so dull and stupid he will not even play; and I fear we shall lose him." And the tears ran down her cheeks as she caressed her only child.

"I have just found out what ails the boy," said the family physician, to whom I soon after mentioned the case; "he is dying from the effects of tobacco."

"But sir, you surely do not mean to say that little child uses tobacco?"

"I do," he replied. "I was myself astonished to find that the boys in the street had taught him to chew it; and he begs and steals it from his grandfather, who smokes, or gets the boys to buy it with his own pennies; so that it is almost constantly in his mouth, and is ruining him utterly in body and mind."

The physician, not without great patience and perseverance, convinced the parents of these facts; and the child, entirely deprived of the tobacco.

gradually regained his health and mental vigor, and in another year had quite recovered.

Thus little Benny, while they yet called him "baby," ran out upon the sidewalk, and getting into one of Satan's schools learned, as his very first lesson there, the use of tobacco—a lesson, which, but for God's interposing mercy, had been his utter ruin.

Yes, the use of tobacco is always one of the branches taught in Satan's schools; and those who learn this lesson are likely to go on to the far more ruinous ones of which you will read in following the history of Dick.

CHAPTER VII.

GAMBLING.

DICK and the other boys, who went to the cellar under the church to learn to smoke and were locked in, were compelled to remain there all night. I will not attempt to tell you of their sufferings, or of the distress of their parents and friends as they sought for them in vain; neither can I tell you how wretched and ashamed they felt as they crept to their homes in the morning, having been released by one of the carpenters, who happened to go to the unfinished building Sunday morning for a forgotten coat, just in time to prevent them from committing damage in breaking their way out.

Dick's mother was overjoyed to see her boy, and was quite satisfied as to the cause of his absence when he told her that he had been accidentally locked up for the night. As for his father, he was sleeping off the effects of the rum drunk the previous evening, and cared nothing either for his son's absence or for his return.

On Monday morning being told of Ernest's kindness to his mother and the baby, Dick exclaimed, "Yes, Ernest is a bully boy; and I wish

I had taken his advice Saturday and bought me a hat with my money: for see here, mother, this is all that is left of my palm-leaf."

The mother smiled faintly at the ludicrous effect of the brimless hat, with its border of tangled curls; but the smile ended in a groan as she said, "And poor mother has not even twenty-five cents with which to buy her boy a new one."

"Never mind, mother," said Dick cheerfully. "I'll earn a new one before school-time; for I know where I can get a job at sawing wood. So, at noon, you will see me walking home in my new hat."

Hastily finishing his breakfast, he hurried off in search of work.

He went at once to Mr. Brown's, near the schoolhouse, where a large lot of wood lay waiting to be sawed, split, and piled. Seeing Mr. Brown in the garden, Dick accosted him in his usual off-hand manner: "Good morning, sir," with a bow, and comical flourish of his hand in the direction of the hat-crown. "Want to hire a smart boy to saw up that wood?"

"Well, I don't know," said Mr. Brown, smiling. "I am getting rather old and stiff to do it myself: so may be I will hire you, if you will keep steady to your work, and make a good use of the money."

"Now, see here sir," replied Dick, grabbing off his hat, and whirling it round on the tip of his fore-finger before Mr. Brown's eyes; "would it not be a good use of my money to buy a new hat with it?"

"Yes," said Mr. Brown, laughing.

"Well, then," said Dick, "I will saw with all my might till school-time for twenty cents; and on my way to school I'll pay the money towards a new hat.

"Agreed; there is the saw," said Mr. Brown.

Dick went to work with a will, and pleased his employer so well, that at half-past eight, he handed him fifty cents instead of the promised twenty, saying that he must start for school early in order to buy his hat by the way; and that he would give him the whole job of sawing to do, if he continued to work so well.

When school was done, Dick started for home in excellent spirit, thinking of his new hat and eight cents in his pocket which remained of the hat money. For they had shown Dick a little favor at the hat-shop that morning, selling him a half-dollar straw hat for forty-two cents. But, alas! in going home, he must pass the school of evil at the corner, and he was there stopped by some of his companions who were playing marbles on the sidewalk.

"We play for keeps!" cried one of the boys. "I'll lend you some marbles to begin with, Dick; and you'll win 'em back, and a bagfull for yourself besides in a jiffy, I'll bet, because you always do beat, you know, whether it's one thing or another."

Dick accepted the offer; but he lost instead of winning, and soon spent three of his cents for marbles, to repay those borrowed and to commence another game. This time he won and in half an hour went home with his stock of marbles more than doubled. His first impulse was to tell his mother all about the extra money he had earned; but then he thought how nice it would be to have money of which she did not know, to buy marbles with, in case he lost his in play; so he decided to deceive her, and let her think that all the money he had earned had been spent for the hat. So, when she kissed his cheek and called him "mother's bright, brave boy, mother's hope and comfort," his heart, instead of leaping for joy, sank with shame and misery.

Dick had intended to saw wood a while after school at night; but he excused himself on the plea of fatigue and went to play marbles at the corner instead. Just as he was finishing a game in which he was the winner, the man who had given him the cigar came out of the store, and touching him on the shoulder, beckoned him into

a little back room, where three lads, somewhat older than Dick, were seated around a table, with cards in their hands.

"These boys," said the man, "want to know how to play something better than marbles, and I am going to teach them to play cards. I will tell you all about the game, and then I will sit here and see who remembers and plays best. Each one is to stake a dime, and he who wins the game has the whole. What say, Dick? Will you do it?"

Poor Dick, proud to have been the one chosen for the game, proud of having the requisite money and proudly confident too, of ability to win the game, sat down and learned his first lesson in gambling. First lesson? Ah, no! that was learned when he first played to win marbles. Yes, Satan's teaching in this branch often begins with that easy lesson.

Dick won the game at cards and with it all the dimes, which amounted, you know, to forty cents, and then, as one of the players was obliged to leave, he also went home. But his gains only made him unhappy; he well knew that they did not rightly belong to him; yet he burned with eager desire to win more in the same way.

Thus Dick proved, in his own sad experience, that gambling is one of the branches taught in Satan's schools.

CHAPTER VIII.

FIGHTING.

"He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city."

SATAN'S assistants, in the shape of the older boys, delight in setting the smaller ones upon each other, like dogs or untamed beasts; and very many come to think that a fight is noble, and to shun it is weak and cowardly. Many a truly-courageous boy who, grown to manhood, cheerfully risked or gave his life for our country's salvation, found in boyhood his moral courage taxed to the utmost in resisting the well-nigh overwhelming influence to engage in these petty and ceaseless brawls.

Ernest, who was as brave as he was good, had never suffered himself to be drawn into a single fight; but sometimes he had to come home from school crying out,

"Oh, mother! I have had such a fight with myself to keep from fighting when the boys dared me to do it!"

Then his mother would tell him how it is ever the weak and ignorant who are most ready to fly like savages into a contest, and how slow to do it

are the truly noble and refined. She would tell him a true story of a great and brave man who faced the world's scorn by refusing to fight a duel; and of another who, not having the moral courage to face that scorn, slew the bosom friend who had challenged him, and then longed, in vain remorse to lie down in the grave with him whom his own hand had slain.

When we left Dick, he had just taken his first lesson in card-playing. Gambling and fighting ever go hand in hand. Ask, if you doubt it, any city policeman concerning the nightly brawls in the gaming-saloons. Dick, although one of the best-natured of boys, had been taking street-lessons in fighting from his infancy, and made it a point of honor to pitch battle with every bully who dared him to the contest. When, therefore, Ernest one evening met a group of young men bearing Dick home, apparently lifeless, he was not surprised to hear that he had been fighting with a grown-up boy, and had got a blow in the temple which had "settled him."

"Go ahead, Ernest, will you, and let his mother know before we come upon her?" added one of the bearers.

They were already almost at the door, and Ernest, hastening forward, stood almost breath-

less before the mother, quite at his wits' end as to how he should break the sad news.

"Do you know where Dick is?" was her first eager inquiry.

"He is on his way home, but is hurt. One of the big boys has hit him and made him faint, or something of the kind, and they are bringing him in," stammered Ernest, driven to make his message brief by the sound of feet already at the door.

Dick's mother neither fainted nor screamed as she looked on the death-white face of her boy; she was too familiar with anguish for that. She motioned them to lay him upon the bed, and, kneeling beside him, searched in silence for any signs of life.

"He is not dead!" said she, turning quickly to Ernest. "Oh, if we could but have a doctor at once!"

"I will run for ours," cried Ernest, as he almost flew to call him.

It was not far, and the doctor, himself benevolent, was not slow in catching something of Ernest's ardor and in hastening to the sufferer. Under his judicious care Dick soon began to breathe and to move; but his mind was bewildered, and the words he spoke wild and unmeaning.

A youth, perhaps sixteen years old, had lingered when the doctor had ordered the room cleared; but his presence evidently excited Dick, and the physician again motioned him away. The lad beckoned Ernest to the door and groaned aloud as he cried,

"It was I who struck that blow. I quarrelled with him about the deal of the cards and dared him to fight; and then in a rage because he, so much younger than I, was getting the better of me, I struck him that blow on the head. Oh, if he dies or is made foolish by it I will kill myself! I will never live to see it!"

Ernest was silent, not knowing what to reply.

"I shall stay here," said the lad, throwing himself down on the steps; "I will not leave the door till I know the worst."

Ernest went in. Dick became more quiet and inclined to sleep.

"Some one must sit by him all night," said the doctor, "to keep the bandages about his head wet with ice-water and to give these medicines hourly. If we can prevent a congestion of blood in the head all will be well."

Finding that Ernest's presence seemed to promote the mental quiet so essential to his patient, the doctor consented to his getting leave from his

parents to share the night's watch with Dick's mother. Dick slept a good deal, and Ernest stole out several times to find the lad still upon the steps, waiting and listening. At last, hoping something from the quiet within, he went home, bearing with him his fear and remorse.

Past midnight Dick's father came home drunk; too drunk, fortunately, to quarrel; too drunk for anything but to tumble down upon a pallet which his wife had spread for him and there grunt and sleep like the brute into which rum had converted him.

"Oh, mother," said Ernest when he appeared at home the next morning, "Dick is better: he knows us now, and the doctor says the danger is over. The young man who struck him came there at daybreak, and he cried and sobbed like a babe, and said he would never dare another boy to fight while he lived. But only think, even now Dick tells his mother he will fight just as quick another time for all this: he 'wont be made a coward by anybody's knockdowns!' Isn't it dreadful!"

"It is, indeed, my son; but Dick was taught at the street corners when a very little boy to think it smart and brave to fight, and lessons thus learned are not easily unlearned."

CHAPTER IX.

STEALING.

ANOTHER evil lesson which Dick was early taught in Satan's schools was stealing. Does my youthful reader say,

"I did not think Dick would *steal*. He might smoke, gamble, fight, and waste the little he had honestly earned, but I thought he was too large-hearted to commit such a contemptible sin as stealing"?

Ah, but Satan's teachers make the first lessons in every vice easy and attractive; and one of these first instructed Dick, when very young, in the art of slyly and adroitly appropriating to himself an apple, a handful of nuts, or anything else displayed at the store. It seemed to him and to some others only amusing to see a child possess himself of these things, under the very eyes of their owner, so slyly and deftly as to escape detection; and as he was always very free with what he "hooked," the older boys all cheered him on, sharing his spoils and calling him "a cunning rogue," a "cute monkey," and other names which he regarded as highly complimentary.

This lesson well learned, it was but a slight advance to lighten the overloaded trees, bushes, and vines of the farmers' orchards and gardens; and Dick's bad teachers, the older boys, instructed him as some of the heathen do their children, that the sin lies not in stealing, but in being found out in it. Dick, who was very bright, alert, and cunning, was seldom discovered in his small thefts, and became an adept in petty larceny while he yet passed for an honest boy.

When Satan finds a boy has thoroughly learned the lesson of pilfering in the groceries, candy-shops, bakeries, gardens, and orchards, he does not think very much about the higher branches of the science of stealing, although he knows our reform schools, penitentiaries, and State prisons are full of thieves, robbers, and housebreakers, who commenced just in this way. He knows how many burglars and highwaymen, who in other lands have paid the penalty of these crimes upon the gallows, have in their dying confessions disclosed the fact that it was success in these little beginnings of theft which lured them on to their fearful end.

We have seen that when Dick set out to earn anything by hard work he was successful; but it seemed so much easier to him one day to slip into his pocket a dollar bill which the storekeeper left

carelessly upon the counter, than to make his bones ache by earning it at Mr. Brown's wood-pile, that he stole the bank-note, and not being detected, grew bolder in his thefts, altogether neglecting his work, being found instead at the card or billiard-table, which kept him always in want of money.

Satan loves to have people in debt, for debt is a fruitful source of crime and misery, which are his delight; so he gave one of his assistants a hint to lend Dick a couple of dollars when he was in straits for it, whispering,

"Just let him be in debt to you, and you can bend him to your will, for the borrower is ever the lender's slave."

This boy Robert had also another power over Dick, in having seen him steal the one-dollar bill; so he thought he could make him do as he pleased in a plan which he had formed for getting some more money. The plan was for Dick, who was skilful in all such arts, to hide himself somewhere in the store and get locked in. Then in the night he was to rob the money-drawer, let himself out, and share the spoils with Robert, who being large and strong, was to act as guard and protector on the outside; thus, in fact, throwing all the risk of detection, and in the eyes of the law, all the crime of housebreaking, upon Dick.

Thus the big boys who lead the younger ones into sin always leave a door of escape open to themselves through which they can run away, leaving those whom they have brought into trouble to bear all the sad consequences.

Robert, after dunning Dick for what he owed him, and threatening to expose his theft if he did not pay, until he dreaded the very sight of him, after in every possible way working his mind up to the highest pitch for money, finally proposed his plan and gained Dick's reluctant consent to it.

He easily succeeded in secreting himself and getting locked in; but when in the stillness of the night he found himself alone in the store, his heart misgave him; he realized for a moment how rapidly he was advancing in the school of crime, and would have given anything to have waked in his hard bed at home finding it all a dreadful dream.

Alas! it was no dream. He heard Robert's signal whistle beneath the back window, and knew he was waiting there to share the spoils and would betray him in his guilt unless he received the money. He lighted a lamp, broke open the drawer, took the contents—a few dollars, all in change—and joining Robert, shared the money, paying him his debt besides.

Dick was arrested, tried, and condemned, for the crime of housebreaking, and sent to jail alone, Robert clearing himself of all share in the guilt.

Boys, beware of the very beginnings of theft. A child who has learned to take even an apple which does not belong to him has entered upon a dangerous way.

One of the very first and easiest lessons taught in Satan's schools is called by his assistants "hooking," which word means nothing less than *stealing*.

CHAPTER X.

REJOICING IN INIQUITY.

YOU may be sure that Satan, who has his schools in so many better places, had one in jail also, and Dick during his term of attendance learned some new lessons of evil, of which I can mention but one this time. Everybody in the town where Dick lived, thought that when he got out of jail he would come home hanging his head in shame, blushing and hiding his face at the slightest allusion to his crime. Instead of this, the good were grieved and the bad rejoiced to find, that during his absence Dick had learned the sad lesson of taking pleasure in his evil ways. He walked the streets with a proud, defiant air and head erect, shaking hands gleefully with his acquaintances, alluding with a smile or laugh to the fact of having made himself famous and taken a vacation at the expense of the State. Ernest, who feared Dick would be too much broken down by his disgrace ever to try to be good again, called at once with words of comfort and encouragement for the fallen upon his tongue's end, but

returned without uttering one of them, quite shocked into silence by the change in Dick.

"Mother," cried he on reaching home, "I did not say one of the kind things I meant to to Dick, because, instead of feeling sorry and ashamed, he is proud and boastful of his sin and its punishment. How can he feel so!" And Ernest's mother replied,

"Paul says of certain people in the old city of Philippi, whose end was destruction, that their glory was in their shame; and the same fate is predicted of those Thessalonians who had pleasure in unrighteousness."

"Dick did not feel so before he went away," replied Ernest. "When I went to see him, after his trial, he could not hold his head up, and cried and wondered I would give my hand to a criminal; and when I tried to encourage him, he only said, 'Never, never! after being in jail I can never look honest people in the face again.' Now he says, 'Ern, you'll never come to anything in your humdrum way of living; 't is enough sight better to do something worth while and let folks see you're up to snuff and do n't care for all the judges, juries, and jails Uncle Sam can muster.'"

"This lesson of boasting himself in evil, which Dick seems to have learned in prison, is a long step in the downward road, my son. In the

intercourse which he doubtless had, by stealth if not by permission, with the wicked inmates, he was taught by those who 'sleep not except they have done mischief, and their sleep is taken away unless they cause some to fall.' Nothing tends more rapidly to this fall than the recounting of their own evil deeds for the very purpose of glorying in them, to which such are always addicted."

Now, I trust none of the boys who read this book will ever have a chance to learn the lesson of rejoicing in iniquity in such a place as Dick did; but I would assure you that you may be tempted to this great sin without going in the least out of your way to learn it. To show you this, I will tell you the truth about a boy in one of the Boston public schools. A dear friend of mine, going to board with this boy's mother, inquired of her respecting his progress at school. She answered,

"Harry has always done first-rate until this term, bringing home excellent reports, and mourning over every bad mark; but now he seems to have lost all his ambition, only laughing at his errors and failures, and indeed, seeming to delight in them. What can it mean?"

"Perhaps it means that some bad boys are making him think that black marks are an honor."

The mother could hardly credit this; but, not many weeks after, my friend learned that it was truly so. It was a rule that all who were in their seats five minutes before the doors closed should receive two credits. As Harry's cousin Albert was hastening in one morning, he called out to Harry, whom he saw loitering about.

"Come, Harry, hurry up and you can get two credits this morning to offset some of those bad marks yesterday."

"I don't want 'em offset," replied Harry. "I got the black marks on purpose, and mean to get all I can to-day: for Ned and John and Jem and I are going to see which can get the most this week; and the one who does is the best fellow. See if I do n't manage to get the most!"

He easily managed it, to his mother's bitter grief, and the joy of Satan's assistants—Ned, John, and Jem.

Thus Harry, who, the previous terms of that year, had won diplomas for good deportment and recitations, and had been his teacher's pride and praise and his mother's hope and joy, was now learning in this school of Satan to glory in his shame, and to have pleasure in unrighteousness. Boys, beware of this lesson!

CHAPTER XI.

DRUNKENNESS.

You already know that Dick's father was a drunkard. When he was married, he was a fine, healthy, industrious, prosperous man; and his bright young wife little thought of the wretched years which were in store for her. Now, her husband had used the fiery poison of alchohol so long, that his naturally superior mental faculties were ruined, and his physical powers were all prostrated. I will not say he had become a brute: that, my dear boy, would be a libel upon your noble horse, your gentle cow, your faithful dog, your graceful kitten, who are all as God made them to be. Dick's father, by drunkenness had fallen far below the brute; being only a curse to those who had once loved him, and whom he once had loved.

It was certainly dreadful to have him live; but ah! it was far more dreadful to have him die without a ray of light upon his future, as he did soon after Dick's trial for house-breaking. I have only space to tell you that he got a hurt in one of his drunken quarrels, from which a healthy man would readily have recovered; but inflamed

as his whole system was with alcoholic poison, it brought on a fever, which speedily ended his days. His wife wept bitterly over his coffin, remembering all the love of those earlier years, and all the blighted hopes, the anguish, and heart-break which had come with the intoxicating cup. Dick, melted into tenderness by grief, strove to comfort her; and turning to him she answered,

“Ah, Dick! there is one drop of comfort, only one, in my bitter cup. You know what might have been but for rum; you know what it has done for him and for us, and you never can, never will, taste it. Promise me, promise me, Dick.” Dick promised; he was ready to say anything to pacify his mother; but, alas! his promise was worthless; for, among all his other lessons in evil, he had not failed to learn the lesson of untruthfulness.

Still Dick meant to keep his word, for he could not be indifferent to the bitter lesson of his father's hard, cruel life and fearful death. In view of that life he had early learned to loathe the very thought of the cup; and the teachers of Satan's schools had found him one of their most obstinate scholars in learning the lesson of intemperance, for between him and that cup stood his father's disfigured form, his hand of insane fury.

But Satan at last triumphed in spite of all, as he ever will over those who put themselves under his teaching. Dick could not smoke, gamble, cheat, swear, and have pleasure in those who did such things without at last yielding to the influences around him by drinking too. Thus when he made his promise to his mother over his father's coffin he knew, what she did not, that he had often already drank strong ale and wine, and sometimes even whiskey and rum.

For two or three evenings after the funeral Dick stayed at home with his mother, and while baby Etta slept they formed plans for the future, the poor desolate heart beginning to build hope for itself upon the ruins of the past, all founded and centred in the fond assurance that the son could never be, as the father had been, a drunkard. Dick thought it dull work to stay at home through those long evenings; for when a lad has learned to spend the early hours of the night abroad with bad associates, the charms of home and a loving mother's presence have lost their power; so after a few evenings of unwelcome restraint Dick found his way once more to his old haunts. Hours went by, and the patient mother, busy in repairing a suit of clothes for her boy, excused his absence, thinking no evil, until it grew very late; then, although worried and dis-

tressed, she still comforted herself with the thought, "Whatever else he does, he never drinks, and while he does not, there is hope for him."

Past midnight she heard an approaching step which she knew was not her son's, and her trembling hand admitted the bearer of evil tidings.

"Dick wanted me to come and tell you he wont be home to-night; but he's well enough off, he says; you need n't worry."

What mother would rest with such a message? Cross-questioning elicited the fact: that Dick was in forced confinement, having been taken up for inflicting a serious wound upon one of his companions in a drunken street-brawl, in which he had also been slightly wounded. He was to be tried the next day for his offence. Furnishing herself with bandages for his wound, the mother left her sleeping Etta alone, hastening to gain admittance to her erring boy. One thought of comfort she hugged to her aching heart by the way:

"He was not, cannot have been drunk, for he never drinks. It is only this terrible fighting notion he has got, of which I hope some of these hard knocks will yet cure him."

She entered the temporary prison and approached the prostrate form, trembling with fear

for his wound as she saw him lie with blood upon his face, hands, and garments.

"Never fear for that, ma'am," said the kind attendant; "he has only a little cut under the edge of his hair; it is of slight account."

But the mother stood with clenched hands and a fixed gaze of agony viewing that face. It was not the wound; but the truth was horror to her soul—her boy was drunk!

Without a word, without relaxing a muscle from that fearful look, she turned to go. The attendant, frightened to see her face, spoke again:

"He will come round all right in the morning; it is only a little too much whiskey."

"Never, never!" groaned the mother. "Was it ever all right with his father in the morning? Is the drunkard's grave, just filled over yonder, all right?"

She closed the door and went out alone through the darkness to her desolate home. She found the little one awake, crying for "ma" and "Dit" by turns. The poor mother sat down, hugging the child to her breaking heart.

"Where's Dit?" questioned Etta.

"Where, where?" sobbed the mother, for the first time finding relief in tears. "Oh, why did I not rule him while I could? Why did I indulge him so foolishly and let him go to the places where

Satan teaches all evil, even to the little children? O baby! God help me to keep you as I did not him!"

The next day Dick had his trial and was sent away to the Reform School.

Bad as he had become, he had by no means got to the end of the lessons which are taught by those who love darkness better than light. There were yet more fearful sins, such as licentiousness, perjury, burglary, murder, suicide, which lay in the road he was travelling. Glad indeed am I that the facts of Dick's future history are such as to permit me at this point to follow him out of Satan's schools.

PART II.

CHRIST'S SCHOOLS.



CHAPTER I.

THE YOUNG TEACHER.

THE Reform school, as Dick found it, was scarcely a favorable place for reform. The boys composing it, each sent there for some sin, had all been pupils in Satan's schools, and their wily deceiver was not likely to let any one escape him there for lack of teaching. In the schoolrooms, the sleeping-rooms, the working-grounds, the playgrounds, everywhere, Satan in the Reform School had still *his* schools, instructed by faithful assistants, ready and proud to follow the suggestions of their principal.

At the very threshold Dick was met by the teachers of these schools of vice and heartily welcomed to the lessons and counsels of those far worse than himself; and he would have gone onward with swift feet down the broad and even descending way to those gates of death which open into Satan's kingdom of eternal despair, had he not found also within those walls one of Christ's schools.

You will perhaps think I mean that the institution was a school of Christian influence, or if

not so altogether, that Dick found himself there compelled to attend a Sabbath-school whose faithful teachers, inspired, like the dear teachers in yours, with a Christ-like love of souls, strove with earnest prayer and effort to win him to the service of their adored Redeemer. But I am sorry to say, that whatever of such purely Christian influence the Dicks of this hour may find in the reform schools, it was absent from that to which our Dick was sent. The reform of the pupils was doubtless sought by all the teachers, and plenty of good moral instruction was dealt out to them; but that is not what I mean by a school of Christ. The motto over the entrance of all Christ's schools is, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." There are a great many schools in our land called "good" and "excellent" which raise a very different motto.

Very many times had Dick been urged to reform, very many times had he resolved to do so; just so many times had all his good resolutions been swept to the winds by the first breath of Satan's temptations. Even his mother's instructions, which centered not in the cross, had availed no more than a spider's web across that downward road. If, then, even a mother's good and fond, but Christless counsels prevail not, what could avail the best efforts of Christless strangers!

Blessed was it for Dick, that Christ had in the reform school one little temple consecrated to himself alone, though that temple was only the penitent, trusting heart of one of the smallest boys there. This boy, named William, had indeed, like Dick, been sent there for the commission of sins learned in Satan's schools; but, unlike Dick, he bore there the memory and the instruction of a mother who had early taught him to lisp the name of Jesus and besought him with her dying breath to walk in his way, commending her orphan boy with faith which grasped the eternal promise, into his keeping who is the Father of the fatherless; and although, for a time it did seem as if God, forgetful of his promise, was suffering Willy to fall into Satan's hands, he did not suffer it, but sought him out of the reform school, by that unseen Spirit which can enter the blackest prison walls, and the blackest heart, with converting and cleansing power.

Has my reader already thought of the Willy, who dropped out of our sight just as Dick and his associates were luring him into evil ways? and are you asking if this Willy can be he?

Yes, he is the very same. If you are surprised to find him in the reform school, you can't be half so much so as Dick was when he saw him there the first morning after his arrival. He was not

only astonished but moved by the sight. He had always liked Willy, and he was too frank and honest by nature not to admit to himself at once that it was due to his own evil influence that good little Willy got turned from right to wrong ways. Now they were both in a prison, and the younger and better boy had got there first. Dick tried to harden his heart and not care, but really he was touched, grieved, almost softened by the sad fact.

He thought Willy must hate the very sight of him, and when the boys were allowed to go into the yard for a recess, under charge of monitors, he was careful not to go near him, and when he saw Willy coming over to him he dreaded the reproaches which he felt sure Willy would utter; seating himself on a bench in a corner he turned his head away pretending not to see him. But Willy came to his side and putting his hand gently on Dick's shoulder said,

"We're in trouble together, Dick. We'll be friends and try and help each other, wont we?"

"Why Will," cried Dick, "I should think you'd hate me! Did n't I start you on your way here?"

"My own wrong-doing started me," said Willy. "I'm trying to do right now."

"That's more than I can say for myself, so

don't follow me any more. I never wished you evil, Will. I liked you. If you'r trying to be good here, I don't want to hinder you; so just you let me alone and I will you. We can't be friends."

"Don't say so, Dick. We are friends. Let's try and help each other."

"I tell you, Will, I don't want to do you any more hurt; and I'm sure to if you don't let me alone. I'll take your part though if any of the big boys plague you and you need anybody to fight your battles."

"Fighting is n't allowed here, Dick; but I know you mean to be kind to me, and I thank you. I have n't a friend here, nor a friend in the world. I'm not going to let you alone, nor let you do me any hurt. So now, Dick, do n't you try to shake me off any more."

"Well, I wont then. Tell me how such a good boy as you ever got here so soon."

"If I tell you now, I must make a short story of it, Dick; and I don't think I could bear to make it long.

"You know we moved to the city so as to have father near us. He was a pilot, and could be with my poor sick mother oftener there. But she grew worse and only lived a few weeks. Sometimes I was glad she died without ever

knowing how bad I had grown, and sometimes I would have given all the world for a chance to confess the truth to her. It was n't but a few weeks after she died that sister Martha and I were both taken sick the same day with measles. We were poor, and father was not at home; and sister took cold trying to keep about to take care of me, and she died and I lived. It seemed dreadful to me at first; but now I'm glad she was the one to go, because she loved the Saviour and went right to heaven to be with him and with mother, which I could n't possibly have done then.

"After I got better I was so lonesome and miserable that I went into the streets for company and got with a set of very bad boys and fell into their ways, managing to keep it from father, who was away so much.

"One day a policeman brought me word that father was drowned. I never saw even his dead face. There was some accident on a boat, and he went overboard at sea and was never found. Soon I was ragged and hungry, destitute and desperate. Instead of leaving the bad fellows and trying to earn bread honestly, I let them lead me and make a tool of me to do their riskiest work. So I was engaged with them in a robbery and got sent here. I'm better off now, Dick. I've found the best of friends."

"Only just now you said you had n't a friend in the world!"

"I'm always forgetting that Jesus is in the world, though we can't see him. He is the friend I found, or, rather, he's found me. Oh, Dick—"

Dick wondered what Willy would have said if the bell had not rung for the boys to be silent and form in line to go back to their places. What could it be that, even amid such a tale of sorrows and in such a place, made Willy's cheeks glow and his eyes, just before full of tears, beam with eager delight?

Satan, who always trembles at the name of Christ, began to be anxious lest he should lose his efficient assistant Dick, and he whispered in his ears,

"Oh, it's only a little religious nonsense Will has picked up with his thinking about his mother and the rest of his dead folks. You'll soon help him shake it off."

"Will I?" thought Dick, who supposed Satan's whisper to be his own thought; "will I, or wont I? Have n't I done that dear little fellow mischief enough yet? I wont, Dick Langdon, so there! I wont try to make him think religion is only folly. I'll let him love a doll-baby if it will comfort him!"

So Satan, thus answered, skulked away, and

although, as you will soon see, Dick did not keep his promise as fully as he intended, still the thought did him good. The first step in his upward career was a sincere desire not to lead Willy into any more evil. The first blow he gave Satan was a decided refusal to act the part of a tempter.

Thus we find Willy possessing the "new heart," which Jesus says every one must have who would serve him here or live with him in heaven. You will, perhaps, say, "What has this to do with Christ's schools?" Just this, that Willy, having first become Christ's scholar, learning at his feet those lessons of penitence and trust which made him "a new creature," became also one of Christ's teachers, striving to impart these same precious lessons to others. This was Christ's school in which Dick was to learn his first lesson of availing good. Do you think it must have been very hard for Willy to teach Christ's lessons? Perhaps you will not think so when you learn in what a childlike, easy way he first spoke a direct lesson of good to Dick.

"Dick, have you any mother?" asked Willy, coming to Dick's side as he sat lonely and sad a few days after his arrival.

"Yes," said Dick shortly; for the thought of his mother cut his heart.

"O Dick! I am glad you have a mother. My mother is in heaven. I can never see her, write to her, speak to her again, until I go to her there."

"Unlucky for you, if you want to see her, that she has gone to that nice place," answered Dick recklessly, "for, by all accounts, the gates are all fast locked to such sinners as you and I are."

"But, Dick, Jesus opens the gate to every sinner that knocks; it says so here in his own words: 'Every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; to him that knocketh it shall be opened.'"

"What! the gate of heaven? I don't believe it says a word about a gate; let's see."

Dick meant to puzzle and tease Willy into silence, and Satan thought it a fine time to make Dick break all his good resolutions, about not disturbing Willy's faith in religion. But Willy's faith was founded on a Rock against which Satan is always bruising himself.

"Now, Dick, you are older than I, and brighter, too," answered Willy pleasantly; "and you know, or may know if you will read it, that it means just as I say. Not that there is any real gate, as we know of,"

"Or any real Jesus, as we know of," interrupted Dick; thus revealing to Willy the terrible

fact that skepticism was one of the lessons which he had learned in Satan's schools.

"O Dick!" cried Willy, his eyes filling with tears, "I am so sorry, *so sorry* you don't know there is a Jesus."

"How do you know there is? I'd like to know that."

"Why, I never doubted it, even when I hated to hear of him, because my mother loved him so. She could never have loved any one so, that—that was n't real; and now, O Dick, I love him myself, and I know for myself. Did you ever read the life of Jesus here in the Testament?"

"Well—n-o, not much of it; but then"—

"If you would only read this book—my Testament! Will you if I lend it to you? I can borrow another."

"Well, yes, I will read it; for when I tell a fellow I don't believe in a man, I do n't like to be obliged to answer, 'no,' when he turns round cool as a cucumber, and says, 'Did you ever read his life?' Pretty cute that, for a little boy not so bright as myself; eh, Willy!"

Willy, though no fool, was not bright enough to see in what he had been "cute;" neither did he know, in putting that blessed book into Dick's hands, what a faithful teacher he had proved himself in Christ's schools.

CHAPTER II.

REPENTANCE.

DICK kept his promise to read the life of Christ in the little Testament which Willy sent him.

He did not read it because he had promised to do so, or because he thought it a duty. He liked to read any interesting book, and thought, with truth, that it was a shame for a boy of his years to be obliged to say "No," when asked whether he had ever read the life of Christ. So he began to read and was deeply interested. It was all new to him. He had not heard it at home daily, or been taught it weekly from the pulpit and in the Sabbath-school, like yourselves. If he had ever heard that Jesus died for sinners, the words hardly had for him a meaning. But by the time he had read the gospels through, that greatest of all facts, the death of Jesus on Calvary, had sunk down, not only into his mind, but into his heart also; for Willy was asking Jesus to come to Dick's heart as he read the Testament; and He did come. Don't you think it strange, that after Willy had been asking his heavenly Father very earnestly to make Dick interested

about Jesus and his cross, he was astonished to have Dick walk up to him one morning and say, "I am interested?" It is strange, boys, that he was not expecting it. But I will tell you a little sad secret of my own: I do just so strangely myself. When I ask my dear, kind father here, to give me anything he has promised, I expect it; but when I ask my dearer, kinder, heavenly Father, I am surprised that he keeps his word. I know it grieves him that I do not trust him. But I must not talk of this, but of Dick, who walked up to Willy and said,

"I am interested in your Testament; what say to having a talk about it?"

"I am so glad!" Willy said aloud, while in his heart he whispered, "Dear Heavenly Father, I thank you; forgive my doubting."

"You say you're glad to talk, and then sit mum as"—

"Don't you know folks can't talk so well when they are very glad or very sorry? and it makes me both to think of Jesus."

"How's that?"

"Can't you begin to think, Dick?"

"I just begin to think I ought to be sorry."

"Do you? O Dick, I am glad!" Willy, being again astonished, again whispered a little prayer in his heart; and Dick said,

"You're glad if I'm sorry?"

"Yes, if you're sorry the right way."

"What way is that?"

"When you were sent to jail, that time you told me about, wasn't you sorry for what you did just because it sent you there?"

"Yes, I was."

"But that kind of being sorry did n't do any good, for as soon as you got out you went right on doing just as bad or worse things. Everybody is sorry for his sins that way; but there is another way Jesus wants us to be sorry before he can forgive us."

"Yes, like that man who said, 'God be merciful to me a sinner;' or like Peter, who 'went out and wept bitterly' when Jesus looked at him."

"Yes, Dick. The first time that I think I ever felt sorry the right way, I kept saying over and over in my mind this verse, which I had heard my mother sing very softly to herself as she went about her work:

" 'Was it for crimes that I had done
He groaned upon the tree?
Amazing pity, grace unknown,
And love beyond degree!' "

" 'The tree' means the cross; don't it, Willy? It was strange he should do it for anybody; but for me—not for me; you would n't pretend to

say he groaned and bled there for such a bad fellow as poor Dick?"

"Yes, for every one of us, and most of all for the worst:

"'Not the righteous—sinners
Jesus came to call.'

My mother used to sing that too."

"I wish this Jesus was in the world now, Willy. I would make bold to ask him if he thought it worth his while to forgive such a bad fellow as Dick and try to make anything of him. But he is n't here, and I don't know what to do." Dick tried hard to keep a tear from falling as he spoke.

"But he is here, Dick. I pray to him every day, and he hears me. When I felt as you do, I asked him to forgive me, and he did. Come in here and let us kneel down and say just what we would if we could see Jesus."

Dick hesitated. The proceeding seemed to him a bold stroke; it was going farther than he intended. But Willy kept praying for him in his heart, "Jesus, please make him come to you. Oh, do, do!" And then he knelt down, holding and pulling Dick by the hand; and so he knelt down too; and when Willy had first prayed, Dick said, half choking with the effort,

"Lord Jesus, you know just what a bad boy I

am. Do make me sorry the right way; and if you can forgive me and make me good, please do. Amen."

"Don't put in any ifs," said Willy. "Do you think, after Jesus has died to forgive us, he wont or can't, if we will only let him?"

Dick shook his head doubtfully and sadly, saying,

"I am so bad, Willy; you've no idea! There is the bell! We must go with the other boys now; I hate to."

"Are you going to do right to-day, Dick? If you are sorry the right way, you will leave off doing the things you are sorry for. If you don't, Jesus can't forgive you. Now don't swear or lie or quarrel or break any of the rules to-day."

"I wont; I mean, I'll try not to. And, Willy"—Dick colored up and choked and had hard work to get it out, but did at last—"Willy, that's a good fellow, you know Jesus best; just you ask him to help me, will you?"

So repentance was Dick's first lesson in Christ's school.

CHAPTER III.

SUBMISSION.

DICK had been so long accustomed to do wrong that he found it hard to do right even for one day.

The boys, noticing his changed deportment, teased and tempted him almost beyond endurance, and Satan, fearing to lose such a promising pupil, left no art untried to turn his thoughts away from Christ's teachings.

But Dick, who had a strong will of his own, which he had long used in heartily serving Satan, used the same will now in resisting him, with such good effect that the great adversary saw he must strike him unawares through some weak point of the armor of resistance which he had put on, if he would not be the loser in the conflict.

Now Dick had naturally a very warm heart and a very quick temper, and Satan, who is willing to use both good and bad weapons in his warfare, took advantage of both these traits of character in his efforts to keep Dick out of the path to heaven. As you read on you will not fail to see just how it was managed.

"What has come over Dick to make him so dumpish?" said a boy, good-naturedly enough, noticing that at recess he stayed away from the set of bad ones with whom he had begun to be intimate.

"Oh, did n't you know," cried Peter Martin, an ill-looking fellow who was within sight and hearing of Dick, "that he's under 'concern of mind,' and is meditatin' goin' on pilgrimage to the New Jerusalem in company with brother Will Wingood? Prosperous journey to the pilgrims and plenty of psalm singin' on the road.

"Hark! from the tombs a doleful sound!"

Peter sang the above words through his nose, with the thumb and fingers of his right hand also extended from that facial projection in an expressive gesture of contempt towards Willy and Dick, who stood together trying to get a chance to speak of serious interests.

Both the singing and the gesture were brought to an untimely end by a tremendous blow from Dick's fist, so successfully struck upon the offending nose that the owner of it, though much the larger boy, was laid flat, the blood streaming from his nostrils.

It would be difficult to tell which of three persons was most shocked by this sudden occurrence: Martin, who lay groaning on the ground amid the

mingled jeers and commiserations of the group around him, Willy, whose fond hopes for his friend were for the moment turned to despair, or poor Dick himself, who felt the instant after he struck the blow as if he would give the right hand which did it to have the deed undone; for, with the quick despair of an ardent nature, he too was ready to give up as lost all hope of change to a better life.

Dick was immediately reported for fighting by the monitor in charge of the playground, and in a few minutes was called, with the victim of his hard blow, before one of the teachers, Mr. Elton, to answer for his behavior.

"What have you been doing, Langdon?" said Mr. Elton sternly. This teacher really possessed the most culture, refinement, and kindness of any in the school; but knowing nothing of Dick's new purposes for good, and having seen him mingling from choice with the worst boys as a leader in evil, he felt it his duty to treat with severity this open disregard of all order and discipline.

"I have done very wrong," said Dick humbly.

But Mr. Elton could not see the humility, and was too much accustomed to have boys say whatever they thought most likely to save them from punishment, to think the words a sincere expression of penitence.

"You are reported as having suddenly sprung upon Martin, without any attack or even threat on his part, felling him to the ground with a single well-aimed blow in the face from your doubled fist."

Mr. Elton glanced from Dick to Peter, who with his purple nose already swollen to double size, dark circles under his eyes, and an old handkerchief stanching the still flowing blood, presented a pitiful aspect.

"The report is true, sir," replied Dick.

"Had Martin at any previous time, attacked or threatened you?"

"No, sir."

"Have you any excuse to offer for this violence?"

"No, sir."

"Have you any explanation, whatever, that you wish to make?"

"No, sir."

Dick's answers were truly prompted by a self-accusing repentance, too deep to utter or even to have any excuse or palliation of his offence. But Mr. Elton, never having seen in Dick before the slightest trace of shame or contrition in view of wrong-doing, very naturally mistook his brevity and composure for indications of indifference or obstinacy. Still wishing to give every possible opportunity for both parties to explain he said,

"Martin, have you anything to present. Have you a standing quarrel with Dick?"

"Me, sir? No, indeed, sir! The boys all know Dick and I have always been good friends. I hav n't the least notion what has set him against me, sir."

"Is the monitor's report and Dick's admission that you did not provoke this attack, even by words, true?"

"Certain true, sir. I never spoke any way but peaceably to Dick in my life, and hav n't spoke a word of any kind to him to-day sir; he wont pretend I have."

"Has he spoken to you to-day, Langdon?"

"No, sir."

"What were you doing at the time of the attack, Martin?"

"I just happened to be singing sir, nothing, bad either and nothing to do with Dick. He just knocked the words out of my mouth, when he sprung at me and did what you see, sir."

"Martin, you may go. Langdon, now we are alone have you anything to say for yourself?"

"No, sir."

"You admit the truth of all the statements that have been made?"

"Yes, sir."

"You knew that fighting, either in sport or

in earnest under any pretence or provocation was strictly forbidden?"

"Yes, sir, I did."

"Langdon, when boys come here thinking to make the ground allowed them for healthful recreation a battle ground, even if they think they have just battles to fight, the rules require me to use the rod in convincing them that they must keep the peace. A still severer punishment is due to one who makes an unprovoked attack, or at the very best one with provocation too slight to be worth mentioning."

Dick utterly dumb with self-accusation, was still supposed to be sullen.

"Take off your jacket, Langdon. The use of the rod is always abhorrent to me, but if anything could make me willing to use it, it would be to teach one who delights in giving blows, how blows feel."

A whipping followed, probably the severest one ever inflicted by gentle Mr. Elton, the more so for the fact that still mistaking the culprit's silence for obstinacy, he thought it his duty to continue the punishment till stubbornness was broken by pain.

At last looking straight at Dick's pale, quiet, face and detecting there neither emotion nor a bad spirit, he was greatly puzzled and asked him if he felt sorry for his offence.

"I am sorry, Mr. Elton." Dick said it just as quietly in the same deep tones that he had said, "No, sir," and "Yes, sir," before his punishment.

"If my severity has made you sorry I suppose it is justified," said Mr. Elton more to himself than to Dick. But Dick considered himself addressed and that respect required reply and a truthful one and he said,

"No punishment is so great as I deserve, but I don't think it has made me any more sorry."

Mr. Elton viewed the boy with profound astonishment. Naturally a man of kindly instincts and quick perception, he could no longer fail to see that the lad was sincere. He could not understand him and he made him a study. Not being himself a penitent believer in Jesus Christ, it was not easy for him to understand the case fully, but he had sympathy with noble sentiments and the desire to cherish them both in himself and in others. The better to understand Dick he inquired,

"When did you first feel truly sorry for your act?"

"The very minute I did it."

"Why?"

"Oh, Mr. Elton, I can't tell you half the reasons why." Dick's voice was choked with

emotion now, and tears, that had not come with bodily pain, were waiting leave to fall. "I was trying to obey Christ, and—and—failed."

"But, my poor boy, I am sorry to feel obliged to say that since you came here you have not appeared to be even trying to do right."

"That is true, sir. I have been trying to do about as wrong as I possibly could, almost ever since I can remember, till quite lately—till Willy Goodwin lent me his Testament for me to read the history of Jesus Christ."

"Do you mean that it was a new history to you?"

"Yes, sir. When Willy asked me if I had ever read the life of Jesus, I felt ashamed that I never had, and I told him I would; and I went about it just as I would to read the life of Washington, or anybody I should be mortified not to know about. But, oh, Mr. Elton, it's so different, so strange, so wonderful! Willy said, and the Testament says, that the love and pity and—and—dying are for the worst, and so I hoped they might be for me; and I did n't mean to do wrong any more; I hated the very thought of it. Then, all in a minute—you know what I mean, sir: I've lost my chance."

"Are you going to do about as wrong as you possibly can again, Langdon, because you think

you have failed of some great good you had in view?"

"No, Mr. Elton; I mean to try very hard not to be as I have been. I will try to do right, and when I fail, as I see I'm likely to, I'll bear the consequences as well as I can."

"Was that the way you were feeling when you made me those short answers?"

"Yes, sir. If they seemed disrespectful I did n't mean it. I wished I had anything to say, but I had n't."

"You were ready to say truly that you were sorry and ashamed, and wished and would try to do better?"

"Oh, yes, sir; more sorry and ashamed than I could possibly tell you, and determined to try to do right: but so sure I shall still do wrong that I do n't dare to promise anything!"

"And you felt that you deserved punishment, and therefore took it patiently."

"It was deserved, and I tried to bear it willingly."

"Langdon, in a few minutes we must go. Give me your hand and your pardon for misunderstanding you: mistaking your penitence for pride, sullenness, and obstinacy. Do n't despair because you are surprised into evil. After what has passed, will you consider me your friend?"

"May I? Oh, thank you, Mr. Elton! But I'm not fit."

"Then you honestly forgive me?"

"No, Mr. Elton. There is nothing to forgive."

"We must differ about that. Are you willing to ask Martin's pardon before the school for your unprovoked attack?"

"I am more than willing to ask his pardon, and I'd like to have everybody who knows what I did hear me; but I can't say 'unprovoked,' because I was provoked out of all sense and reason."

"Ah! What was— But I will ask witnesses, as I own I should have done before I judged your case. I put no faith then in Martin's word, but I failed to remember that there is such a thing as self-condemnation."

Dick only understood that Mr. Elton was troubled, and said remorsefully,

"I am very sorry; but I can't say I meant to deceive you. What provoked me so at the time seemed nothing the minute I realized what I had done."

"Let me say plainly, Langdon, that I find no fault with you for your silence as to what provoked you. We must go now to the school-room, where I shall soon call on you for your public apology. Let it be only an honest one."

When Mr. Elton and Dick came from the little room where they had been, into the large school-hall, there was a good deal of curiosity among both teachers and scholars as to what had passed. The head master, Mr. Hawkins, a hard, almost savage-looking man, commonly called by the pupils "Old Hawk," because of the merciless manner in which he pounced upon and handled his victim, went aside with Mr. Elton, and the boys wished they knew what he said. We can have the privilege, and may learn from the conversation a little of the trying position in which Dick's new-found friend was placed.

Without even the forms of that courtesy which almost invariably exists among associates, in every business and calling, Mr. Hawkins began:

"Mr. Elton, I judge by appearances, that you have failed to give that ringleader of disturbance, Langdon, the thorough thrashing he deserves, and I am going to call him up here, and give it to him lively; make an example of him for his own improvement, and that of the school. Let them all see if there's to be knocking down, and blood-letting, who is the one authorized to do it!"

Mr. Elton replied very calmly.

"Mr. Hawkins, I know I have sometimes failed to punish with deserved severity, and Langdon's appearance naturally leads you to think I

have now; but I assure you I have administered the rod more severely than I ever did in my life, before, as his waled back will testify. I thought him sullen, because he was silent, and had, withal, a little of your feeling, that one who gives blows should be made to feel them. I think the boy is really sorry, and anxious to reform. I trust you will think I have been severe enough, in this instance, waiting at least for a fresh offence, before you punish."

"Oh, a little more of the same sauce that has served so well will not be amiss!" replied Mr. Hawkins; and he was turning to call up Dick, when Mr. Elton detained him by saying firmly.

"Stop a moment, if you please, Mr. Hawkins, and let me be understood. If I remain here as a teacher all cases of discipline entrusted to me will be settled by me with the offender. I will not believe that you intend it, but to add to Langdon's punishment as you propose would be, to me, a personal and public insult, destructive to my influence."

"And if I persist, you will resign, and leave, giving the true reason?"

"Yes."

"Well, let the fellow go this time! He'll come into my hands soon enough. You are too useful to be spared, Mr. Elton; besides, I like your

having thrashed him, and you've more pluck than I gave you credit for. I've high hopes of you as a comrade."

"The matter is not ended. Langdon is to apologize, and—"

"Go ahead, Elton! Finish up your case according to the finest rules of moral science. Only one thing I ask, as a special favor, for the general good: tell the school you gave Langdon his licking."

Mr. Elton turned, and addressed the school.

"Langdon, who has been severely punished with the rod for his assault upon Martin, admits that the infliction was deserved, and desires to make a public apology."

A suppressed yet emphatic, "Humph!" expressive of profound contempt, issued from the lips of Mr. Hawkins, and was audible to the pupils nearest his desk, but not to Dick, who thus called upon by Mr. Elton rose and said in calm, earnest tones.

"I am sorry that I broke the rules of the school, and will try to keep them in future. I am also sorry, Martin, that I struck you, and I beg your pardon."

As Dick took his seat, Mr. Elton again spoke:

"At the time this case came to me for discipline, I dismissed Martin, without examining as to the truth of some statements which he made, and

which struck me as very improbable. Now, I will test them by witnesses; for whatever provocation of the assault was given is still unknown to me. First, I will ask the monitor if he can state of his own knowledge what Martin was doing at the time?"

The monitor stated that he was not looking in Martin's direction at the time, but turned in season to see Langdon in the act of rushing forward to strike the blow. Then Mr. Elton asked:

"How many saw and heard what Martin was doing, at the time Langdon started to go to him? Hands up."

Several hands were raised for many saw at the time and all knew, just what Martin did to provoke Dick; and he had himself boasted that he lied about it to Mr. Elton. So the truth was soon told. It did not bring much excuse for Dick's violence, but Mr. Elton saw that it's starting point was indignation at the sneer cast upon Willy and his religion, which was quite a help in the unravelling of the puzzle concerning him.

"You deliberately lied to me, Martin," said Mr. Elton, "when I questioned you as to the cause of the attack, and—"

"No sir, I only said—"

"Be silent, Martin. The words you used are of no consequence, since it was your full intention

to deceive, which is lying. It is a great offence under any circumstances, and to your teacher in a case of discipline, a grievous one, which will always be severely punished by me. You are forbidden to hold any communication, whatever, with the rest of the pupils, until permission is given you by Mr. Hawkins. As you are more with him than me, he will please enforce obedience."

"With the greatest pleasure," said Mr. Hawkins, rising to call the classes to pass to the recitation rooms. "It wont embarrass me a bit, that the doctor might not think one of my thrashings healthy for Martin's broken head. A live coal, applied with a pair of pincers to the end of the tongue, is an excellent remedy for one who insults a teacher with a lie, and the counter-irritation might take down the swelling in his nose." The school laughed without restraint, as they were always allowed to do, at this kind of ridicule from Mr. Hawkins. Nothing ever escaped his sight, and it did not please him that neither Mr. Elton, Dick, nor Willy smiled. A time came when he recalled the fact in a tumult of mental strife.

The better portion of the school felt that Martin had acted a very mean part, and were very inconsistently ready to make a hero of Dick, both for knocking him down, and for being sorry for it. But Dick knew nothing of this.

CHAPTER IV.

FAITH.

THAT evening Willy, who had been breathing unspoken prayers for Dick all day, got leave to see him alone. To his joy he found him reading in the very same little Testament he had loaned him.

"O Dick," he cried, "you have n't got discouraged and given up trying, have you! I'm so glad of that!"

"I'll never stop trying to be better," answered Dick. "It has been a hard day, but not half so hard as I deserved. Think, when I had promised you and myself to bear everything for Christ's sake, just think of my pitching into the first fellow that crossed my temper with a sneer! It roiled me most because it was at good things and *you*; but that's no excuse. It was all in a minute, and I never can tell anybody how bad I felt the next."

"Try and tell me a little of how you felt."

"I felt, 'it is a gone case for poor Dick now! I have lost my chance. I can't ever be good, and so Jesus can't ever forgive me, and I may just as

well give up trying.' Then I looked over where you stood watching me with such a distressed face and with your hands clasped as if you were praying for me, and I remembered all I had been reading here in your Testament about Jesus and what he did and suffered for us, and I decided in an instant, 'I won't do another bad thing because I've done one. I'll try to act right now, and let God do just what he thinks best with me. I deserve the worst.' "

"But, Dick," cried Willy, quite staggered by what his friend expressed, "we can't bear what we deserve, and God don't want we should. He promises to forgive us, for Christ's sake, and wants us to trust him that he will."

"Yes, I know; and I thought I was sorry, and had asked him to forgive me, and was going to do right; and the very first thing I knew I was acting just as bad as ever. He can't mean to forgive such?"

"Yes, he does, Dick, if you're sorry you did it and don't want to any more. He's just as willing, I'm sure, to forgive you what you did to-day as what you had done before."

"You think he wants me to believe that he will?"

"Yes, you must trust him to forgive you everything always."

But Dick had not yet learned that lesson fully, and answered still,

"Even if I'm so bad he can't forgive me, I will keep on trying to obey him and let him do just what he pleases with me."

Willy thought, "That is a strange way to feel; it is n't the way I feel. It is n't faith, I know; but then it is something good. Let me see, what is it? Well, it seems to be submission; and perhaps Jesus will let that answer for Dick a while, and turn it into faith for him by-and-by."

Still Willy did not feel very easy about Dick while he refused fully to trust the promises of Christ, all of whose words he himself believed, just as you believe the promises of your father, if you are so happy as to have one who never deceives you. So he said to Dick,

"You say you will let Jesus do just what he pleases to you, which can't be worse than you deserve. And I guess that is partly, but not wholly, the way he wants us to feel; because, you see, we can't bear what we deserve; and Jesus don't want we should, and has died that we need n't. He wants to forgive us, and wants us to come and ask him to, *and to trust him that he will, because he has promised.*"

"I do n't want to doubt, Willy. You thought this morning that if I, who have been bad all my

life, came to Jesus sorry and ashamed of it all, and resolving to try to do right in future, Christ would surely forgive me; and I tried to believe he would, though it seemed too good to be true. Now, do you say, if this same bad, forgiven Dick, in about half an hour flies into a rage at a trifle, and knocks a boy down with a blow that might have killed him, Jesus promises to forgive him that, too, as well as all the rest, just the moment he repents and asks him? Do you find any such promise as that in your Bible, Willy?"

"Why yes, Dick, to be sure I do. If I did n't what would become of me, sinning every hour? You must trust him to forgive you *everything*—what you did to-day or may do to-morrow, just as much as all the past. It was bad to get angry and strike Martin; but I do n't believe Jesus is half so sorry that you have done that as he is to have you think he is n't ready to forgive you for it."

"Sorry! Do you think he cares?"

"Why, Dick! Do n't you think even *I* care enough to be real sorry and ready to do most anything I can to help you?"

"Yes, indeed. If I did n't, I would n't be talking it over with you."

"But do n't you see that Jesus, who died on the cross for you, must care a million times more

than I do, and be a million times more willing to talk it over with you, and forgive and help you? Only you must trust him, for he do n't promise to do anything for any one who do n't trust him. The biggest sin of all, and the only one he can't and wont forgive, is unbelief, which means—means, 'not trusting.'"

"I'd like to see again where it says so, though I do remember now that the Testament was all full of telling us about it—believe, *believe*, BELIEVE; as if that, after all, was what they all thought the most of wanting us to do."

"Certainly; it is just the one only thing that can save any of us, Dick." Willy opened the Bible and read aloud some very precious texts, of which I will only give a few:

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

"This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom he hath sent." Jesus said, "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "Without faith it is impossible to please Him." "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

Then he read where Jesus commands us to for-

give one another even seventy and seven times in one day; and when Dick had heard all, he said,

"I do believe, Willy, it is worse to think he wont forgive it than it was to do it; still it seems too much to ask, and as if I could n't think he would. I wonder if trusting is easy work. Do you do it always just when you ought?"

"No, indeed, Dick. I am always failing just there. None of us would ever trust enough to get forgiven, I do believe, if Christ did n't help us; but he can and will if we ask him. You remember the man who said, 'Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.' "

When Dick, alone in his hard and narrow bed, that night, prayed as he had never prayed before, the cry was not so much, "Lord, forgive," as "Lord, help, teach, make me to trust thee!"

And Dick learned the lesson of *faith*.

CHAPTER V.

OBEDIENCE.

DICK suffered so much for the first notable sin in the new life which he meant to lead, that he thought as he reflected upon the events of that day,

“If God will only forgive me this once, I will never, never, behave so badly again.”

The feeling which he had was unlike anything he ever felt before about his wrong-doing. He really hated what he had done because it was forbidden of God; and he meant not to disobey any more. He had yet to learn by bitter experience how difficult the lesson of obedience is, even to the most devoted pupil in Christ's school, who has not learned it in early youth.

When he made that public promise to try to keep the rules of the school in future, he was quite honest, but had not had time to think of all which it involved. When he did think, he realized better than before what his Saviour meant in the words which had seemed very sweet to him as he read them: “Take my yoke upon you and learn

of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

Dick had never bent his neck to take the yoke of any obedient service, and the lesson was not an easy one. But he had entered with all his heart into the service of his new Master, and he soon realized that his own wishes and habits must be changed not only in great things but even in what he regarded as trifling matters; for no disobedience could be a trifle.

"Willy, do you think it is wrong to whisper in school," inquired Dick.

"Why certainly; I don't see how you can even ask such a question."

"Oh, I am not going to whisper, because I promised to keep the rules, and that is one of them, and I know it would be a sin to break my promise; but if I had not promised I do n't know but I might whisper."

"It would be wrong, then, all the same, I'm very sure," replied Willy, whose mind was clear about it because he had been trained to obey in little things.

"As to the actual wrong of whispering, I do n't believe the Bible says, 'Thou shalt not whisper,' does it?"

"Dick, do n't speak that way of the Bible!" cried Willy in dismay, thinking he meant to trifle.

"Why, Willy, how shocked you look! I wouldn't speak irreverently of that precious Bible for any thing. But I do mean just what I said: the Bible don't say I mustn't whisper in school; and if it was n't for my promise, I don't see but that I might sometimes, when I know it's for a good purpose. I want to do right, but I don't like this being tied up like a baby, with a string of useless little rules."

"O Dick, I'm sure you know better if you'll only stop to think. Even the rules about little things are necessary, and for our good. How could we study if whispering was allowed? But that is n't the reason we must not do it. The Bible says we must obey those that are in authority over us. It means our parents, teachers, and all such; and the laws of the land. We are imprisoned here for having broken the laws that were made for good reasons. You'll see it a great deal plainer than I can tell you, Dick, if you'll only think, because you know the most."

Willy did not realize that he was by far wiser than his older friend on the subject of obedience, because he had learned it from his cradle, and had never failed to know that disobedience was wrong, even when he practiced it in the days of his wandering.

Dick however, was candid, and clear-sighted,

and when he had thought the matter over and consulted his Testament, came to the correct decision that service to Christ required obedience even in the smallest matters, to those who were in authority over him, unless they required him to do what God forbids. He bent his neck cheerfully to the yoke, because it was Christ's, while yet he knew that for him it might not prove easy, because he had not worn it hitherto.

Quite an undesirable intimacy existed between Dick and his seat-mate, John, who though not so hardened in sin as some others was still a bad boy, especially full of mischief, and, withal, an inveterate whisperer.

On the very day of the above conversation, no sooner had Dick begun the diligent study of his arithmetic lesson than up went the half of the desk-cover belonging to John, who, while he rattled slates and books as if in search of something, was buzzing in Dick's ears a plan for some mischievous "fun" at recess. Our hero tried to cypher away, giving no heed to his neighbor.

"Desk cover down !" called the teacher, Mr. Hardings, and down it went with a slam.

"It seems you do n't know the use of a desk," said Mr. Harding. "Take your book and slate and stand in the floor."

John was obliged to obey, and Dick, thinking

himself well rid of a serious annoyance, learned his arithmetic lesson, and recited it to the entire satisfaction of his teacher.

But John had not studied any while standing in the floor, having spent his time in trying to make the school laugh at queer and vulgar pictures, which he drew upon his slate under pretence of cyphering when Mr. Harding was looking in his direction, and held up for their inspection when he turned in another direction. He thought himself undiscovered in these games, and when he made an entire failure of his arithmetic lesson said,

"I've been studying it all the forenoon and could n't do a mite of it."

Mr. Harding made no reply to this, save to order him to stop after school, when he found some very offensive pictures in his desk and it ended in John's getting a hard whipping.

"It's every bit your doing" cried John, angrily, when he next met Dick, "if you had answered me 'yes' or 'no' when I put up my desk-cover and asked a civil question, I should n't have kept it up long enough to get noticed. Now I just want to know what you meant by not answering? Were you mad?"

"No, John: I never felt friendlier; but I have decided not to whisper any more."

"Not whisper! Why not?"

"Because it's forbidden. Don't you know I promised to try to keep the rules. 'No whispering' is one of them."

"Pish! We all have to promise when we're licked. It don't amount to anything, only that we knock under for that time. Nobody looks for anything else."

"But I am sure Mr. Elton will in my case, because I promised of my own accord and only just what I want to try to do."

"Mighty fine! You had better pretend!"

"I've been so bad, I don't wonder you think it is ridiculous, John. But the worse one is, the more need of change. You may as well understand at once that I am in earnest when I say I mean to do just as well as, can; not because I must, but because I want to. So don't whisper to me any more, for I sha n't answer you."

"Will Wingood is the only fellow here that don't dare to whisper; he has got no more pluck than a fresh water clam. Who'd have thought one licking would have started you so far on the pilgrimage along with him, just as Martin said!"

"If my memory serves me, Martin's remark occurred before what you call the 'licking.' But seriously John, I have started on a pilgrimage with Willy, for whom I have the highest regard,

if by pilgrimage you mean the way to heaven. It is what we're trying for and we'd like to have you go too,"

"How good you be!
Oh, let us see
How many 'll go
Along with me!"

John who was bright though ignorant, had a gift at making rhymes as well as pictures. The above were accompanied by the same contemptuous gesture towards Dick which Martin had used, and when John had made it he turned on his heel and ran away to a knot of the worst boys in school who were always putting their heads together over some evil scheme.

Dick was not in the least angered; his folly and sin in Martin's case were too fresh in his memory to allow him to fall again into the snare. He stood looking sadly after John, fearing that he had not said the right thing to him, when Willy, who had been watching at a distance, came to him saying,

"Never mind, Dick, 'blessed are they that are persecuted.'"

"Will they persecute me, Willy?"

"They will persecute us both if we do right. They always have plagued me all they could in small ways, although I never had much to do with them; but they had made up their minds

that you were one with them, a ring-leader in evil, and they will try to make you pay dear for leaving their set."

"We can bear to suffer in obeying Christ, can't we, Willy?"

"Yes," he replied. Then, although they longed to be together, they separated going as duty required each to his own task.

John hastened to say what he wished to the bad boys he had joined, because they would not be together long and Martin was stealing this rare opportunity to break the rules of silence which he found very burdensome. The group kept out of hearing, and no one was allowed to enter it till he pledged himself, under penalties peculiar to themselves, to report that Martin had not spoken a word if called to bear testimony as to the facts. And they said among themselves for the benefit of those least inured to falsehood,

"He has n't spoke a word, he has spoken thousands." As soon as John had taken this pledge he cried,

"Dick has set up for a saint. He got me licked to-day, because he was too good to whisper so much as 'yes' or 'no;' and what's more, he is n't sorry he did it and says he wont whisper any more, because it's wrong, and he's going to keep the rules because it's right!"

"Just think of it! Dick Langdon!"

"Bet he has caught that disease religion, of Wingood. They say it is catching."

"Awfully by spells; we don't want any of it spreading round here, eh, fellows?"

"No. No. We don't, we don't," shouted the pupils of Satan in concert. And the reader will please understand that almost every one of these worst boys, being thoroughly versed in the profane and vulgar language of the adversary's schools, interlarded what I write of their talk with such oaths and obscene words as should never be even quoted. I would not even call them to mind by so much as this statement, were it not essential to the truth of my story. No one who begins the use of improper language is safe from going to this extreme.

"If Dick wont whisper to you, John, stick pins in him," suggested one.

"Darnin' needles," amended another.

"We'll make it hotter than fire for him!" put in Martin, making up in virulence of tone for what he dared not put in loudness.

So the threats went round till it was finally concluded that both Dick and Willy, but especially Dick, might as well be martyrs burning at the stake by a slow fire, as to try to be religious in that Reform School.

"See here, fellows," said Martin in the same deep tones of hatred, "what a sweet scrape I got him into only just doing nothing. We'll get him into worse, ones doing something. His temper's like gunpowder, a spark'll fire it off."

"Better not fire any more sparks into that powder-house till you get over the effects of that last explosion," said one, who, not liking Martin over much, was willing to have his joke upon his still swollen and discolored face.

But although the laugh was thus turned on Martin, it was likely to be no laughing matter for their mutual enemies in the end.

"You need n't think to try that on to Dick again," said John. "He isn't any fool of a fish, I tell you, to swallow the same hook twice."

"Mighty wise you are! Most as smart as you were fooling Harding about the ciphering!" muttered Martin.

"You'd better twit on licking!" cried John. "See what you'll catch from Old Hawk. I warn you faithfully as a mother, he'll catch you talking without any of us blabbing."

"Dry up on that," cried one. "What makes you think, John, that Dick won't bite at the same hook again?"

"Best of reasons. I've tried him. I used

Martin's expressive gesture, called Wingood a clam, and hove at him some of my best original poetry; and he never so much as winked."

Here a bell that must be heeded cut short the plotting; but the schemers muttered as they separated.

"We'll make him catch it!"

CHAPTER VI.

TRUTH.

DICK was not naturally a deceitful boy; he was too bold for that, and was always inclined to speak out the truth and take the consequences. Still, as he did not learn when a little boy to do it as a duty as well as an impulse, his lessons in Satan's schools had led him to disregard the truth whenever it seemed most convenient to do so, and especially when he thought he could do any one a favor. His schoolmates had come to feel that they were secure from any report of their evil deeds through his lips; his uniform practice being to make out a fair case for them without regard for facts, or to do him full justice without much regard for his own interest.

But his few lessons in Christ's schools had taught him how sacred in God's sight is the truth, and while he had doubted the necessity of keeping all the school regulations, he was too clear-sighted to think, even for a moment, that it would do for one who hoped to please God, to trifle with the truth. When he reflected that refusing to deceive would surely get him into trouble with

the boys, he whispered to himself, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake."

One morning when the whole school was assembled, one of the teachers took a pack of cards from his desk, and holding it up, said,

"This pack of cards was found this morning in the dormitory; and a thorough investigation will be made as to who is responsible for its being there. It will be the wisest course for those who are guilty to own it without compulsion. All who have ever seen or handled these cards will rise."

No one rose. In vain the teacher urged, promising light punishment or pardon to those who confessed. No one would own that he had ever seen or handled the cards, which very plainly reported for themselves the touch of many soiled fingers. Dick was thankful that the teacher expressed himself just as he did, for although he had never seen or handled the cards, he knew of them, and had been told by whom they were smuggled into the building about two weeks previously; and he felt that he would suffer almost anything rather than tell of his schoolmates, especially when he had no guilt of his own in the matter to confess. In his heart he prayed, "O Jesus! what shall I do, if he asks me what I know about the cards? I must not, must not lie!"

The test came sooner than Dick expected; for, after vainly urging all to rise who had seen or handled the cards, he turned to poor troubled Dick, saying very sternly,

"Richard Langdon, rise from your seat."

Dick rose, pale from the inward conflict, but with a manner calm and respectful.

"Langdon, we hoped you were trying to improve. Why do you not confess what you have had to do with these cards?"

Dick was silent, looking down, and wondering whether it would be best to say that he had had nothing to do with them.

"Langdon, have you ever before seen or handled these cards?"

"No, sir."

"Have you any knowledge how a pack of cards came within the buildings?"

After painful hesitation Dick replied,

"Yes, sir."

"Then tell us what you know."

"If I had had anything to do with it myself I would own it, sir; but I had not. I only heard the cards were here and how they came here, and I do n't want to tell of others. I wish they would own up for themselves."

Groans and other signs of disgust came from the boys. Commanding silence, the teacher said,

"There are reasons, Langdon, why you cannot be excused from telling all you know of this matter. You will be severely punished if you do not at once reply to our questions."

"I am willing to be punished if you will only excuse me from answering any more questions," pleaded Dick.

"That will not do; we must get at the truth. Do you know where we found or were likely to find these cards?"

"Somewhere in the dormitory," replied Dick, who knew the boys were playing cards there the previous night. A titter ran round the school-room, and the teacher replied sternly,

"Do not add impudence to guilt! I had stated they were found in the dormitory. Do you know where the cards were secreted?"

"No, sir, I do not. I did not mean to be disrespectful, and beg your pardon."

"What do you know of the way in which the cards came within the building?"

"One who is present told me how they were brought here. He expected me to keep his secret, but I cannot lie," faltered Dick in evident distress.

"What a bad boy expects of you is of little account: we expect and command you to answer our last question."

Dick obeyed; but no words he had ever spoken had hurt him so much in their uttering as those with which he confessed that his seat-mate, John, had told him the manner in which his cousin from the city, when permitted to call on him, had, by previous agreement, smuggled in the cards.

"Yet you pretend to say, Langdon, that this is all you know, and that you never saw or touched the cards yourself?" replied the teacher witheringly. "Do I tell you what you did not know before when I say these cards were found secreted in your mattress?"

Groans and hisses for poor Dick filled the room, but he was silent. His troubled countenance grew calm as he thanked God in his heart that he had been enabled to speak the truth.

CHAPTER VII.

FORGIVENESS.

DICK felt that he had no friend but Willy in all the school. The teachers thought he was trying to deceive them, and his offence against his school-mates in revealing their wrong-doing was the last which a schoolboy can ever overlook.

Alone in the room to which he had been sent for solitary confinement while the affair of the cards was under investigation, he fell upon his knees and tried to pray. His thoughts were all in a tumult, and he tried to calm them by reverently repeating the Lord's Prayer.

"Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors."

Dick paused at these words, started up from his kneeling posture, and paced his room with flushed cheeks and flashing eyes.

Forgive! Oh, how could he forgive even the teachers who so cruelly misunderstood him, much less the boys who had maliciously ensnared him to save themselves, and now heaped scorn upon him for what they knew he regarded a simple act of duty?

"If they would ask me to forgive them, or were sorry even without asking me, I could do it," thought Dick; "but I am afraid God means we must forgive before they even want we should."

Dick had his Testament in his pocket, and remembering that somewhere in Matthew he had read about the king's wicked servant who would not forgive his fellow-servant, he found the place in the last half of the eighteenth chapter, and, after reading it, almost concluded that it might be right to wait until he was asked before he forgave the boys. "For," reasoned Dick, "it says, 'His fellow-servant fell down at his feet and besought him, . . . and he would not;' so perhaps I may wait till they ask me."

But Dick could not finish the Lord's Prayer. Anxious as he was to go on with it that he might pray, "Deliver me from evil," he could not get over the words, "As we forgive our debtors;" for he kept remembering that in the sixth chapter of Matthew the very next words after the prayer are, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." He opened his Testament again, reading the prayer and the words which follow. Then his eye fell upon a

verse at the top corner of the same page: "Bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." Matt. 5:44.

Poor Dick was clear as to his duty now, as every one ever will be who sincerely seeks to know it from the Bible, though it was still hard, very hard to do his duty; but God helped him to conquer himself and to forgive at last. Then he could ask his Father to deliver him from evil, to bring him safely through all his troubles.

Late in the afternoon Mr. Elton came to hear the lessons which had been assigned to Dick for the day. He had learned them thoroughly; he said them well, and his manner towards his teacher was gentle and respectful.

"I confess I do not know what to make of you, Richard," said Mr. Elton when the tasks were completed. "It does seem to me now that you are innocent in this matter. If you are, you must forgive me that, while trying to act the part of a true friend towards you, I have still taken it for granted that you were deceiving us."

"I forgave you this morning, and the boys too—which was harder. It should not have been hard, but it was. I have so often deceived that I did not deserve to be trusted, and I wonder that you can believe me now. I can't say how much

I thank you, Mr. Elton, or how hard I will try to deserve your confidence."

"Do you say you forgive the boys for plotting to get you into this trouble and keeping you in it by their own deceit, while they hate, revile, and persecute you for honoring the truth they trample under foot?"

"Yes, sir, I think I do forgive them; I wish them well; I pray God will do them good; I would do every one of them good and no evil myself."

"Who taught you such a lesson as that, Richard? You never could have learned it of me."

"I dare say not, sir: I was so hard at getting it. But my Heavenly Father puts it very strong to me. I must have his forgiveness or die; and he will not forgive me until I have forgiven my worst enemy."

CHAPTER VIII.

LOVE.

THE investigation respecting the cards resulted very speedily in proving the truth of Dick's statement as to the means by which they came within the buildings. The teachers, with the exception of Mr. Elton, did not, however, credit his assertion that he had never handled them. The boys knew him to be innocent, but they were all against him for having told of them, and pretended to think him a liar, a hypocrite, and all evil things combined. Through Mr. Elton's influence he was exempted from punishment then, and was restored to his place in the schoolroom, but his position was a very trying one.

"I thought I forgave the boys," said Dick to Willy, "but I fear I did not entirely. I do n't know as I feel quite right towards them. It seems to me something is wanting."

"Perhaps, while you forgive them, you don't love them enough, Dick."

"Love them! O Willy, I never could love them unless they changed; they are too wicked and hateful."

"You don't understand me, Dick. It is not that you are to love their bad ways; but surely you are to love bad people in the same manner that Jesus does, trying to do them good. 'Love your enemies; bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.'"

"I don't know, Willy, whether I love them or not, in the way Jesus meant. I hate their bad ways and thoughts, which I used to love, but I don't wish them any evil for all their abuse of me."

"More than that, Dick; you see that if you would be a child of your Father in heaven, you must not only not wish them evil, but labor to do them good."

"If I do this, Willy, can I be sure that I have the love Jesus meant?"

"Yes."

"Willy, don't you think we ought to love our friends better than we do our enemies? I don't think I can help loving you more than I do Peter Martin; and I know I love Mr. Elton a great deal more now than I possibly could before he was my friend."

"I guess you are right there, Dick. I don't know a word in the Bible against loving our friends best, and I rather think it would be in-

gratitude if we did n't. But it certainly says we must love our enemies too, and that, just because they are our enemies, we must try to do them good."

Dick had been so unmercifully teased and tormented by the boys, that he had come to avoid them as much as possible; but after praying over the closing verses of the fifth chapter of Matthew, he went among them again, resolved to try to bear their abuse patiently and to watch for opportunities to do them good.

"I shall get a first-class licking this noon, any way," cried Peter Martin as Dick approached a group of boys. "Old Hawk has been threatening to pounce upon me for a month, and at one o'clock I'm to catch a huge thrashing if I have n't got this sum done, and a huge thrashing if the stent I shirked yesterday is n't found hoed; and 't is certain sure I can't do both."

A little more than a month had elapsed since Dick's assault upon Martin, who had verified John's words by getting caught by Mr. Hawkins himself in the act of speaking contrary to orders, and had received for it such a severe scourging that his back was not yet well. He was then sent into solitary confinement for a time, and when released the old restriction about not speaking was removed by Mr. Hawkins, as too trouble-

some to be enforced. He, however, threatened to "pounce upon him" if he gave any occasion. Dick, on hearing what Martin said, felt real compassion for him, and going close to him said,

"I will do the hoeing for you, Peter, instead of eating my dinner."

"I bet you will! Oh, dear! how good you are!" said Martin derisively.

"I will indeed, Martin; so do try to finish the arithmetic lesson and escape all blame."

Peter put his thumb to his nose and with his fingers made the old significant gesture of contempt towards Dick, who quietly left the playground in the direction of the field. He was obliged to work hard and fast to accomplish Martin's task in season; but a few minutes before one o'clock he sought him to let him know that it was finished. He was puzzling over his slate.

"The hoeing is all done; how goes the arithmetic, Peter?" said Dick cheerfully.

The dread of the rod which he expected would speedily be upon him for this and a score of past offences, in one of "old Hawks's" never-to-be-forgotten whippings, quite subdued Martin's pride, and he cried,

"Dick, *have you* done up that hoeing for me! Now if I could only get this old answer out right! but the plaguery thing wont come!"

"Let me see. Oh, here is the mistake, Peter, just at the end; how fortunate that you have the most of it all right! You correct it now while I look over to keep you right. There now, that is the correct answer all straight; and you understand the work, do n't you?" Before he could answer, the teacher was heard coming, and Dick fled to his own seat; not from any sense of guilt, there being no rule to forbid giving help in lessons, but from regard to Martin's feelings.

"It is lucky for you, Martin, that your hoeing is reported done, and it is luckier still for you if you have done that example," said Mr. Hawkins roughly. He was the terror of the school; dealing with other bad natures had made him almost savage, and to fall into his hands was the highest dread of the boys. Martin passed up his slate in silence.

"Explain it," said Mr. Hawkins after reading the answer.

Martin explained it correctly.

"Who helped you do this?" said Mr. Hawkins crossly. He seemed indeed like a beast cheated of his prey.

"Nobody has n't helped me," said Peter boldly. "I have n't seen a soul but Dick since I began the sum, and he is n't likely to be much help to me very soon, I calculate."

"Likely not," growled Mr. Hawkins as he left the room.

"Come, Dick Langdon, now preach me a sermon on lying," said Peter, turning to Dick.

"O Peter, I am sorry you said you did n't have help."

"Oh, I do n't wonder your feelings are easily hurt on the head of lying; but I did n't lie either. I said nobody helped me, and nobody did n't; for you 're a sight less than nobody, by all accounts;" and with the same old gesture of contempt towards Dick, Peter left the room.

"'Love your enemies; pray for them which despitefully use you,'" whispered Dick, as he bowed his head upon his desk.

CHAPTER IX.

PATIENCE.

MY readers must not think that because Dick had become a Christian he found it easy to be good. It had cost him a terrible struggle to forgive and love his enemies, and it was only by thinking much what a great sinner he was himself, and how lost he should be without his Heavenly Father's pardon, that he succeeded for a time. He had hoped that the boys, with whom he had always been popular while he was bad, would be easily won over by his kindness: and he found himself greatly depressed and discouraged by Martin's cruel return for his favors.

"You must be patient," said Willy. "It would n't cost much to be forgiving, if people turned right about and treated you well just as soon as you were kind to them."

But patience was not at all Dick's forte. He was quick, impulsive for good or evil, and could fight a brave battle with himself, or any one else. He had once fought down his angry feelings towards the boys, meaning it should be once for all; but when it came to that patient watchfulness,

which alone, even with God's help, can keep good feelings in the heart, he fell off sadly. So having thought over his wrongs in a spirit no longer loving, and slept upon it, he went into the play-ground the next day thinking, "I haven't much patience with the boys, and I don't believe it would do much good if I had; they must be made to know that I have n't lost my spirit."

Now it so happened that the little seat-mate John, who at heart was fond of Dick, had quite relented towards him, on hearing how nobly he had treated Martin, and had resolved to make up with him the first opportunity. As the first step towards the making up, he resolved to knock Dick's cap off, and throw it over the play-ground fence into the yard, where, to reach it, he must go back through the school-room. John had made up his mind that Dick would meekly return and get it, and if he did he meant to tell him he was sorry he had teased him, and had known all the time that he was right, and that they were all treating him "meaner than dirt."

According to the programme Dick's cap went over the fence. Quite contrary to the programme, John went after it head first, having been instantly seized in Dick's strong grasp, and tossed over the fence like a bag of potatoes. There was a scream when John went over, followed by a si-

lence, and Dick grew pale, not more in terror for the result of his act, than at the thought that all his good resolutions were again broken.

"You've smashed his bones without doubt, if not killed him," cried a big boy gleefully; looking at Dick's white face. "Better tell old Hawk, before he licks you, that you took John for a cat, and sent him over after your cap, expecting him to light on his feet whichever way he was thrown." Dick made no answer, but rushed to John's help through the school-room.

"What is the matter, Richard," asked Mr. Elton, who was writing at his desk.

"O, Mr. Elton, I got angry with John, and threw him over the pickets into the back-yard. Please do come, and see if I have killed him!"

John, who was by no means killed, being much more frightened than hurt, picked himself up very tenderly, just as Mr. Elton and Dick appeared, eying the latter with mingled anger and awe.

"O John, tell me if you are much hurt? Where are you hurt?" cried Dick.

"I guess I'm not killed, as I thought: and none of my bones are broken either," replied John, reflectively, stretching his arms and legs one by one; "but then they might have been for all you, Dick Langdon. Do you see that stone

post; I came within one of bringing up against that."

"Richard, did you say you threw him over?" asked Mr. Elton.

"Yes, sir."

"What did he do to provoke you?"

"Nothing, sir, worth minding. I have n't the least excuse."

"John, what did you do to him?"

"Knocked off his cap, sir, and hove it over here just to tease him, and see how good he would be; to see if believed in non-resistance."

"Well, you find he don't: so stop teasing him in future. John, you may go."

With an indignant glance at Dick, John returned to the play-ground where the boys, finding him none the worse for his fall, save a few scratches, had their laugh at his expense, and concluded not to give Dick up as altogether too good quite yet.

As for Dick himself, he stood with Mr. Elton, alone, in one of the recitation rooms, filled with such bitter shame and regret as no one can understand who has not, by some rash or foolish deed, defeated his own deep-laid purpose of reform.

"Richard, it is too true that you might have killed John," said Mr. Elton mildly. "You could not see where you threw him upon the

other side of the fence, and he fell within a foot of ~~that~~ stone post."

"Yes, sir," answered Dick, shuddering.

"You did not mean to do such things any more, Richard."

"No, sir; but I did do it."

"You do not say that you are sorry, or that you will try to do better in future."

"Mr. Elton, you know—" stammered Dick, choking.

"Yes, your face tells me that 'sorry' is not a word strong enough to express your regret. And you wont give up trying?"

"No, sir, I dare not, I would not, I must not; but—"

"Well, Richard; but what?"

"Mr. Elton, I am dead discouraged. Is it so very, very hard to do as Christ tells us, even when we love him and wish to obey him?"

"It is very hard to be truly good, Richard. I have myself tried it a little sometimes, but never succeeded at all to my mind. As to love of Christ, ah! my boy, you have the start of me there; if you would tell me how to love God, I would try to tell you how to obey him better than we do now."

Dick was sorely embarrassed. Standing, a self-condemned culprit awaiting punishment at

his teacher's hand, what could he do but be silent? Yet Mr. Elton waited as if he expected an answer.

"Oh, Mr. Elton, I am sure you, who know the Bible, must love Jesus who died for you. I did not know that story of the cross until Willy lent me his Testament."

"It has had power to change you," said Mr. Elton reflectively. Dick hung his head in speechless confusion, thinking his teacher's words a bitter irony.

"Richard," said Mr. Elton, rousing himself from a reflection of several minutes, "I am very sorry that it is not possible for me to let your offence pass. Mr. Hawkins only reluctantly yielded to my entreaty to overlook the matter of the cards on the strength of my pledge for your future good behaviour and my promise to report your very next offence to him. Must I not keep my word?"

"Yes, indeed, sir," cried brave Dick almost joyfully. "I deserve to be punished, and I will bear it patiently; but, oh, that wont—wont—what is the word, Mr. Elton, that means make up for the wrong?"

"Atone. Do you mean that bearing patiently the severe punishment Mr. Hawkins will inflict will not atone for your fault?"

"Yes, sir; that can't atone."

"But if you are very sorry and humble and patient and submissive, and are very severely punished, may you not feel that altogether you have in some measure atoned for it?"

"Oh, no, sir! Oh, not one bit!"

Just here the door-knob turned slowly and a timid, anxious face peeped in.

"Come, my good little Willy," said Mr. Elton, "we need you here. Tell Dick what can atone for his sin."

"Oh, sir, we all know that! 'The blood of Jesus Christ.'"

CHAPTER X.

HOPE.

DICK had always loved his mother. In his worst days at home he had often resolved to do better for her sake; but when the tide of temptation set upon him his resolutions had all been swept before it, and her heart was made to bleed afresh for her only son. She was not a Christian, and had never sought herself or guided her son to the only source of true strength. When Dick's promise, made over his drunken father's coffin, never to taste the intoxicating cup, was broken, her heart despaired for him, and never had she been so utterly wretched as since he had been in the Reform School. The last prop of her strength broken in Dick's downfall, she would have sunk into utter hopelessness had it not been for the baby, for whose sake she must live and struggle on; for daily bread came only from the labor of her hands in washing, ironing, and sewing. One evening, as she was taking in the clean clothes from the line, some one passing called to her,

"Mrs. Langdon, there's a letter for you at

the post-office; been on the list a week or so; I thought may be you did n't know it."

Mrs. Langdon said, "Thank you," in her subdued way, while she thought, "A letter! Who could write to me? Can it be Dick? Could he write me from that place? Would he think of me and do it?"

Fifteen minutes later Mrs. Langdon lighted her little lamp and sat down to read the following letter:

"STATE REFORM SCHOOL, September 10, 18—.

"MY DEAREST MOTHER: Do not think I have forgotten you because I have not written before. The boys here do not often write letters, but Mr. Elton, one of the teachers, has given me leave to write to you as often as I choose, and he reads and mails my letters.

"Dear mother, I am trying in earnest to be a better boy. You will not think my trying can ever amount to anything, when I have failed so many times before; but I do hope to be better now, for I pray to God every day, and many times a day, that I may. I am glad I was sent here, although I am sorry for the crime for which I was sent, because here in this place I have found the Bible, and have learned about Jesus Christ who came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief; and, oh, mother, I do hope he has for-

given my sins, and I want to obey him in future. And although I succeed very badly, I still hope and pray and try to do better. I feel that it is a very dreadful thing for one whom God has once forgiven to keep on disobeying him; yet that is just what I am doing every day of my life. But I don't despair; I keep on hoping and trying. I think you used to have a Bible, laid away very choice somewhere, which none of us ever read. Please take it out and read it, for I know it will do you good and comfort you. Please read the fifteenth chapter of Luke. I like to read that. O mother, if I had only learned it when I was a little boy! Do teach little sister just as soon as she can understand to love and obey our Heavenly Father.

"Mother, I meant to commence this letter by asking you to forgive me all my disobedience and all the grief I have caused you. Only to say 'I am sorry' seems very cold. My eyes and my heart are full of tears as I write it. By and by I shall come to you—my term was short and is half out now—and when I come I will work for you, and help and comfort you all I can; and by Christ's help I will never, never go back to the bad ways which I learned in the wicked street schools. I will try to learn Christ's lessons; they are good lessons, dear mother, and I want you to

study them with me. Then you can guide and help me.

"We have a chance to learn here, if we try, and I am getting on very fast in my studies. Mr. Elton, who helps me all I need, says I learn very rapidly, and should hurt myself with study if it wasn't that we have to work a good deal too. How many times I disobeyed you by playing truant from school! How good for me if I had only had a kind father to punish me as I deserved. God forgive me for not heeding your entreaties and tears!

"Please write to me, according to the direction which I send. Do write if it is only a line to say you are alive and well, and that you forgive me, and will hope better things in the future from your son,

"DICK."

"Naughty letter! makes mamma cry," lisped Etta trying to pull it from her mother's hand.

"No, darling; good letter, blessed, blessed letter! Brother Dick has learned to be good."

The child slept at last, prattling till her eyes closed of her brother Dick, who had always been kind to her, and of whom she remembered only good. Then the mother sought the neglected Bible. It was laid away in a drawer, wrapped in a clean cloth, as she had been wont to hide it—

a precious keepsake of her youth—from the greedy clutch of her husband, who would gladly have sold it for drink. She turned to the fifteenth chapter of Luke and read it.

"It is n't for me. There never will be joy in heaven over my repenting," was her agonized thought. "My heart has been growing harder, harder, harder, all these years of my earthly misery. God is not my loving Father. I can't go to him. I do n't know how to find him. O Dick, my poor neglected boy, God may well seek you, and find you, but me, never! If I had lived by this book who knows but your father might! If I had trained you by its teachings you would not be where you are."

The little lamp burned dim and went out, unheeded; the waning moon looked in upon the mother's head, bowed there while she struggled with remorse. The gray dawn found her pleading, "For Thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great." As the rising sun lighted the room she arose and turned the leaves of her Bible no longer despairingly. Over the mountains of her sin the wounded feet came, seeking her pleading soul. The wounded hand of mercy grasped her. Hope, heaven-born, dawned upon her with the morning light.

CHAPTER XI.

JOY.

MR. ELTON had a letter for Dick, which, according to the rules, he must open and read before giving it to its rightful owner. The teacher was a gentleman, and felt repugnance at the act of breaking the seal, but he was accustomed to put down that sentiment in the discharge of many official duties; so he opened the letter and read:

"SEPTEMBER 15, 18—

"MY DEAR SON: It was good to hear from you; before you wrote, it seemed as if I had lost you, but now I have found you, my own dear boy.

"And, Dick, I must tell you at once that I hope my Heavenly Father has found me, and that I have found him. I had no rest after your letter came, until I could say with you, 'I do hope that Jesus has forgiven my sins.' Ah! my poor boy, how many of the sins of your youth lie at my door. You ask me to forgive you; I do, indeed. But can you forgive me, who should have guided your infant feet to God, instead of leaving them

to stray as they did? I can't write of these things, but I long for your coming.

"It seems like a new world to me, my boy. The clouds were so black overhead, that I never thought to see light again, but light has broken through. There is joy in my heart, there is joy in yours; and in the chapter you asked me to read it says, 'There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.' If that very word had not been in the Bible I do n't know as I ever could have found my way out of the darkness.

"Baby remembers 'Dit,' and she always insists that 'Dit is dood.' You will be anxious to know how I have got along in supporting myself and your little sister. We have not suffered: I have been able to get work, which has supplied our actual wants. I have work waiting now to be done, and must therefore say good-by. Write very often to your own

"MOTHER."

When Mr. Elton had read the letter he sent it by a trusty messenger to Dick, and then sat absorbed in thought; and his thought went up to God. He had always led an upright life; the most fault-finding had never been able to take any exception to his conduct, and his tastes were averse to all things low and ungentlemanly. Yet this refined and elevated nature had found some-

thing in Dick's simple heart-experience—the experience of the poor condemned culprit of the Reform School, which touched his heart, and made him think of himself as a sinner in God's sight; and now, again, the words of the mother's letter moved him to thoughtfulness and prayer. For years he had been seeking to ennoble himself, striving to shun the low and attain the high, yet he had found no rest, no inward fountain of joy, like that springing up in the hearts of these repentant ones; no testimony that angels rejoiced over him, or that God was pleased with him. Now he began to fear that he was quite on the wrong track, in his attempt to journey upward; that he had not yet found the door of entrance into the heavenly way; and groping for it he found it less easily than poor Dick, because it was so much harder for him, than for Dick, to give up all thought of fitness in himself, and cling only to Christ's promise to the penitent sinner.

Dick was accustomed to go to Mr. Elton's room for instruction an hour every morning. This morning he found his teacher looking pale; and thinking him ill, exclaimed,

“Mr. Elton, were you sick last night? Is there anything I can do for you?”

“Come here, Dick. I think I can tell you

better than any one else. It is not my body, but my soul that is sick. Do you know what that means?"

"Yes, Mr. Elton, I do know."

"Well, Dick, when the soul is sick is there any remedy?"

"The Bible tells us, sir: it says, 'Yes.'"

"There are so many if's, so many conditions, which I fear I do not meet."

"It do n't seem so to me, sir. It seems to me that Jesus is very willing, very anxious to save sinners."

"I do not doubt that, but the difficulties in me seem insurmountable."

"Too great for God, Mr. Elton?"

"I would speak with great reverence when I answer yes, I fear the difficulties in my own case are too great even for God to overcome."

"Do n't say so, Mr. Elton; please do n't think so! Does the Bible say anything like that, even of the chief of sinners?"

"The Bible seems very clear on one fearful point, that without holiness no man shall see the Lord; and I have n't a bit of holiness. I've spent the night looking it over, and I find all that I had thought holy to be vile in God's sight, to whom the very heavens are not clean. Now what is to be done?"

"Why, Mr. Elton, if you feel so, you can go right to Christ and he will forgive you. You know if you felt righteous, you could n't go near him, because it is only sinners to whom he says, 'Come.'"

"But the Bible, from beginning to end, shows God the hater and punisher of sin."

"And O, Mr. Elton, it shows him to us as the lover of the sinner, even to the death on the cross."

Mr. Elton grasped the Bible with both hands. "Let me hold that thought, Dick. I shall do it best alone; come back in an hour."

Dick went away to pray.

"Mr. Elton turned the leaves of his Bible thoughtfully. He was very calm, as one under the weight of fearful responsibility. He searched to know if the God of the Bible, hating sin, yet loves the sinner, and he found God in Christ, at Calvary's cross, loving the sinner even unto death. He was reading in the Gospel of John, his lashes wet with manly tears, when Dick rapped timidly at his door.

"You told me to come in an hour," said Dick, apologetically, when he had opened the door in response to Mr. Elton's quiet "Come."

"I am glad to see you, but am surprised that the hour is gone. Look here, Dick, isn't this

wonderful: 'That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.' 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life?'"

"Yes, sir. I often wonder what could God find to love in us—sinners, full of what he abhors!"

"Until to-day I was blind to the fact that sin makes us unfit for his love. Now, in the dawning light, I see that we are indeed unworthy of his notice; yet he loves something immortal within us, which his grace, with our consent, can make capable of heaven."

Dick looked a little bewildered.

"God loves the immortal soul he breathed into us, Dick, and will save it from sin, for Christ's sake, if we will accept his terms."

"Yes, sir, I understand that."

"And what are the terms, Dick?"

"That we hate our sins, and try to stop sinning, and trust Jesus to forgive and save us because he promises that he will."

"Yes," replied Mr. Elton, very thoughtfully, "these surely are the terms, repentance and faith. 'There is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved.' You remember, Dick, how in Gethsemane Christ

prayed that if it were possible the cup might pass from him, and it was not possible?"

"Yes, sir, you mean if there had been any other way to save sinners, Christ need not have suffered."

"And if we could become holy by our own resolves and efforts, we should not need Christ. I believe his word, and accept him as my Saviour."

And again there was joy in heaven.

CHAPTER XII.

LARGE-HEARTEDNESS.

"I HAVE some news for you, Richard," said Mr. Elton, about a month after the events of our last chapter.

"Is it good, or bad news, sir?" asked Dick, unable to decide that question from his teacher's quiet manner.

"I think you will regard the news as partly good and partly bad. I am to leave the Reform School in about a week, to become principal of the Academy at Lyme."

"That is good news, I am sure, Mr. Elton; I am right glad for you, sir."

"I had flattered myself, Richard, that I should leave a sad heart missing me."

"My heart, selfish as it is, isn't quite mean enough to want to keep you in a place like this for its own benefit."

"Here is my hand on that statement, and may your heart never grow too small to hold it."

"Growing small must be a queer kind of growth!"

"It is a common form of heart disease, Rich-

ard, but not constitutional with you, I imagine: if it were, grace and nature would have a hard tussle before you rejoiced to part with a dear friend purely for his own good."

"I am glad for you; but I have n't stopped to think how hard it will be to struggle on without you. I feel I sha n't be very brave in bearing it, but I am sure I would n't keep you. Much as I may long to see you, I shall never wish you back here."

"You have understood the painfulness of my position more fully than I supposed."

Dick's eyes flashed up a look of intelligence into his teacher's, as he replied,

"With Mr. Hawkins at the head, and such a set of boys to rule, what a life you have led!"

The conversation, which was in the school-room, was here interrupted, and Mr. Elton, with his eyes upon a book, thought, instead of reading:

"Richard is a noble boy; altogether he possesses an uncommon make-up of good qualities. For the animal part, he has a finely developed, healthy body, which would soon, however, have gone to ruin but for his reform. Then his mind is of no common order. Where others walk he runs; he only walks where others stumble and fall. He was born to be a marked character, a leader in good or evil, and now that he has begun

to live unto God, he is a strange being indeed; all the forces of his soul seem to have gone over from Satan to Christ. I wish I could see a hundredth part the change in my own heart that I see in his; but his is one of those strong, ardent natures which loves, and hates, and serves with a will. The more reason he should be educated into fitness for any service to which God may call him. I wish I could have him with me at Lyme; it is only pleasure to teach a mind like his. But then there is dear, timid, little Willy, his heart loving and confiding as a girl's, his sufferings here are greater in some respects than Richards's since the boys have set upon them both as in partnership. I can take only one of them away, and it is as hard for me to decide which, as it was for Mr. Dustin to select one of his children to be delivered from the Indian's tomahawk."

In explanation of Mr. Elton's thoughts, be it here told that in reply to a petition to the proper authorities for the release of Dick and Willy, before the expiration of their term of confinement, on the plea of thorough reform and good deportment, a letter had been received promising to pardon out one of them—whichever should be recommended—but declining, for reasons which need not here be mentioned, to release both.

"I want Richard, there is no denying that I

do want him most ! I love Willy, for a precious, winsome boy, but Richard is becoming my friend. I want to judge impartially, but the balance of duty is so even that it is hard to tell which way it turns. The other teachers leave it all to me; neither of the boys is a favorite with Mr. Hawkins, who is ready to sign away either or both of them. I believe I will leave it to the boys themselves; which ever remains will be sustained by the thought that the other had the benefit. I wonder what Willy will say when he knows I am going." Mr. Elton called Willy into his room that afternoon, saying to him as he had said to Dick.

"I have some news for you."

"What news can there be for me, sir," said Willy, remembering sadly that he had not a relative to write a letter on his account.

"I am going to leave here soon, to become principal of the Academy at Lyme."

Willy was instantly sensible of the existence of a great lump in his throat; his eyes filled with tears and ran over in spite of him.

"I knew you would be sorry to lose me, Willy, but 't is better for me, you know and the remaining months of your stay will be gone at last."

"If I had any one to go to then! I haven't a friend on earth but you and Dick."

"Perhaps the heavenly Friend comes nearer to you on that account."

"He wont while I feel as rebellious as I do just now," sobbed Willy, and quite overcome, he turned and rushed away that he might be alone.

Again Mr. Elton sat and thought, then he sent for Dick, and told him of the case and that it had been his purpose to try and find a home for Willy at Lyme, and to make some arrangement, if possible, for Dick to attend his school, adding,

"Now only one can be released, Richard, and I find it impossible to decide between you."

"Mr. Elton, how can you hesitate a moment between us?"

"Why should I not hesitate?"

"Willy is the one to go. He has been here longest, and is least able to bear what must be borne here. I certainly should not go to leave him here without a friend, after all he has done for me. Do you remember how much I owe him?"

"I see that you remember it, Richard ; and I, too, remember a debt of gratitude I owe to one of my pupils here."

"I have no doubt you may feel that you owe him gratitude ; but that is nothing to my debt, you know I owe him everything."

"Willy is n't the one to whom my debt is due,

Richard ; I suppose you can't guess whom else I could mean?"

"Surely not me, Mr. Elton ! I don't know what I have done for you but give you trouble."

"Never mind, some other time I will explain to you. So you are quite decided that Willy is the one to go?"

"Yes, sir, and I'm so glad for him, and for you, that I shan't mind a bit staying out my time. I'm older and stronger than Willy. Then you have started me so in my studies that I can learn with the other teachers, and they will let me have letters from you and Willy and mother, and my Bible and Christ will be just as near me here as anywhere. I shall get on finely."

"Well done, Richard ! Go and hunt up Willy, who is breaking his heart over the thought of losing me. You will make him the happiest boy in the land."

"I will tell him there was a petition that he be pardoned out for good conduct, and that the petition is granted, and you are going to take him with you to Lyme. It wont be wrong to leave all out about myself, will it, Mr. Elton?"

"No, Richard, it is quite the opposite of wrong to forget all about ourselves."

CHAPTER XIII.

SELF-SACRIFICE.

DICK had said that he should be so glad for Mr. Elton and Willy that it would be easy for him to stay out his time at the reform school. He had a brave heart and a generous purpose, too strong to be bent or broken, and he bore himself cheerfully, even joyfully, until all the leave-takings were over, and his only dear friends had left him, alone with his enemies, and worse still, the enemies of the Saviour whom he was trying to love and serve. But when they were quite gone, and he no longer needed to be cheerful on account of their presence, his heart sank like lead; the coming months of his imprisonment, which his thoughts had passed over as only a little moment, stood out before him as an almost interminable succession of weeks, days, hours, minutes, which it seemed almost impossible he could ever live through, when the present moment was so hard to bear. He realized that a look into the new Bible, which Mr. Elton had given him as a parting gift and a few minutes of prayer might help him, but it was the hour for work, and to that he must go. As

he bent himself to his task in the garden it did not occur to him that although his beloved friends were gone, and although he could not escape to his closet to seek his Saviour, that best friend was still with him, ready to listen to his heart's faintest whisper. Dick had been a quick scholar in Christ's schools, but he was yet a very young Christian, with volumes and volumes of God's love to sinners lying before him with the leaves all uncut.

Dick was never a mope, or an idler, and the deep rooted carrots yielded themselves rapidly to his hands, while some tears which he was too proud to be caught brushing away, fell on the mellow soil. He was greatly discouraged by his own low spirits, having made the very common mistake of thinking that if he did a right and noble deed, God would so help him in doing it that he would not feel the sacrifice of his own interests and pleasure. He had not reflected that there would be no crosses for us to bear if God bore them all for us.

"Lost every friend you have in creation, hey, Dick! Better try to pick up some of your old ones; they might do better than nothing, upon a pinch." The voice was familiar, but it seemed to come from beneath him, and it took Dick a few seconds to perceive that his former seatmate, John,

in digging a ditch for drainage, had come quite near him just the other side of the hedge.

"I would like to be friends with you, John, but I am not surprised that you do n't feel like it, and can't have confidence in me since the day I got so angry with you. I wish I could do anything to convince you how sorry I am."

A derisive giggle and a shower of soft mud from the drain, adroitly thrown at him over the hedge, was the only response. John had been very bitter against Dick ever since he threw him over the picket fence.

As Dick washed the mud from his face and eyes at the pump, Mr. Osborne, the general superintendent of the farm, approached him, saying,

"How came that, Langdon?"

"It came by my own doings, sir," said Dick, thinking remorsefully of his conduct to John.

"How so? Been spattering yourself with mire?"

"Yes, sir; so to speak."

"Metaphorically, as the books call it, is it? Your own fault then, you think, that the boys bespatter you so freely?"

"It was this time, sir."

"You threw first? Did you?"

"I did." Dick's thought went to the time he threw John, and he felt he might rightly evade the truth to save his enemy from blame at his own expense.

"That is a bad admission for you, Dick. You know the rule: hard work, and extra hours of it, in the ditches for such doings. Get you a spade and be at it. I thought you were above such folly now, Langdon."

Dick went quietly for the spade, but soon returned to Mr. Osborne, saying,

"I am directed to report to you, sir, that so many boys have to-day been sent to the ditches that there is not a spade left." Mr. Osborne reflected a moment, and Dick added, "John is in the drain just over here; he is not strong, and I am. May I take his spade, and let him come here?"

"I have quite as much faith in you as in him; you may keep your own work;" and Mr. Osborne turned to leave. Dick eagerly followed him.

"Mr. Osborne, you said 'may' keep it, not must. Will you be so kind as to allow me to take John's place at the ditching?"

"He was sent yesterday for throwing dirty water on you."

"Yes, I know."

"It will be for a whole month of hard work if you exchange."

"Yes, sir; I am glad it is."

"Very well; go if you choose."

"Will you please order John to the garden, and say nothing of me? I have n't treated him well, and he might not wish any favors from me."

Mr. Osborne passed the word for John with a look of surprise, and was again hurrying away when Dick, who somehow did not feel that he was yet quite right, strove to relieve his conscience by saying,

"Mr. Osborne, I am sorry for all that has been wrong. I desire to do right."

"Are you sorry you pelted some one with mud just now?" There was a twinkle in the superintendent's keen eye as he said it.

"I am sorry for every bit of mud I ever threw at any one," answered Dick, blushing at his own lame attempt at deceit.

"Dick, you never were the boy to tell lies, in your worst estate; what has come over you to deceive for no purpose, now you are a better fellow? You threw no dirt at any one. John threw mud upon you, without provocation, from the drain."

"I did not mean to lie." Dick looked seri-

ously troubled now. "I said I threw first, meaning I was the first offender, throwing John over the pickets once, as you perhaps know. I beg your pardon for attempting to deceive you."

"You wish to work a month at ditching to atone to John. Shall I put on another month of hard work for the deceit?"

"Yes, sir." It was cheerfully spoken.

"I won't do it, Dick. You'd better go to gardening and let John do his own digging. I will give you some pleasanter work over here, out of harm's way, training up those vines."

"Don't deny me the privilege of taking John's place."

"Very well. Only when you get tired of it let me know, and I'll send John to exchange places with you. The worst boys are doing that work, and you are not likely to find your situation very pleasant."

"You are very kind, Mr. Osborne."

"I'm the friend of every boy that behaves himself, and the enemy of every one that don't," replied Mr. Osborne, with more roughness in his words than in his countenance. Dick, who had not been much in the garden, had known him very slightly until now.

As John came by one gate, Dick went by another, and John was set to work in the garden

without knowing why. Dick did not fear hard labor, but when it came to working two hours extra time, which he wanted for his studies, he realized more of the self-denial he had undertaken; but having put his hand to the plough, he was not the one to look back. When, after finishing his evening lessons, he took out his new Bible to read in it for the first time, the following note from Mr. Elton falling from it, was eagerly caught and read by the lonely lad:

"MY DEAR BOY: There have been so many last cares here that I have only a few minutes to write; but you will soon hear from me by mail. You have pleased your Heavenly Father, I feel sure, in your true spirit of self-sacrifice for Willy and myself. Do n't feel discouraged if, after we are gone, your heart fails you and you do n't seem to have the comfort, even from heaven, that you would like. You took up this cross so joyfully that you have hardly realized it yet, and God may let you feel its weight. But remember how much he loves you, and how surely he will relieve you of every burden which that love does not give you to bear. The first day will perhaps be the hardest.

"I pray that God will raise you up friends in the school, but even if he does not, try to cling the closer to him. And remember the beatitude,

'Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' The Christian is the only one who can rejoice at his own troubles.

"Good-by, dear Richard, until we meet.

"EDWARD ELTON."

CHAPTER XIV.

CANDOR.

A FEW days after Mr. Elton left the Reform School, Dick wrote to him as follows:

STATE REFORM SCHOOL, October 13, 18—.

“MR. EDWARD ELTON: My dear sir, I thank you for the kind words you left for me in the Bible and for your letter of Tuesday, which made me very glad. I was not a bit brave the day you left, and behaved like a baby; so in the evening when I first found time to open my new Bible, and discovered your letter, it was comforting to know that you had n't expected any better things of me.

“I do not find myself quite so friendless here in the school as I expected, but I hope I shall not on that account fail of fulfilling your wish, that I may keep very close to my Heavenly Father. The day you left I got a little acquainted with Mr. Osborne in a very queer way, which I should have thought would have set him against me; but instead of that he seems to like me, and while he is very strict, is very kind. John, too, has become as much my friend as he used to be.

He was sent to work a month at digging drains, as a punishment, and as I am a big fellow and he is a little one, and as I deserved to be working there a great deal more than he did, I got leave to exchange places, meaning that he should n't know but that I too was sent as a punishment; but he found out somehow, and it has made him my friend again, which I am sure I don't deserve in the least, after the wrong that I did him. I believe all the rest of the boys hate, me and Him I try to serve. I know I don't always feel towards them as I should, when they persecute me in such small, mean ways, but I try to do right towards them; still I guess there is some pride, mixed up, I hope, with something better, in the way I walk amid their insults and abuse. I don't think I have any claim to the beatitude you bade me remember. To be sure I am 'persecuted for righteousness' sake,' but then I know God finds much in my heart which must prevent him from giving me that great reward which is for those who bear persecution aright. I only dare hope that he forgives me.

"I must go to my work and not write any more now.

"THURSDAY EVENING — I have something good to tell you, Mr. Elton. This afternoon Mr.

Hawkins sent for me to show me a letter he had received, shortening the time of my stay here to only two months longer, if I have certificates of good conduct at that time. I presume I owe it all to you, and I thank you. Mr. Hawkins was rough as usual, and remarked, 'I dare say, Langdon, you will fall to fighting, or worse, and lose your chance for release; and you need n't expect any favors from me. I shall tell the truth when the time comes.' 'I hope you will, sir,' I replied, before I had time to think that silence was most becoming, meaning that I could n't wish any one to lie in my favor. But Mr. Hawkins fired up and said, 'Do you mean an insult, Langdon?' 'No, sir,' I replied, 'indeed I do not. I mean—' 'That's enough,' said Mr. Hawkins, 'no palaver for me; mind your p's and q's, Langdon!' and he dismissed me. I'm sure I do n't know whether he really thinks I spoke improperly or not.

"I do n't feel very certain of getting out before the regular time, because I know I have so many enemies here who will try to get me into trouble, so that the teachers must give bad reports of me. But I will try not to deserve any; you know in what sense I mean that; in one sense I know I deserve a prison all my life for the sins that brought me here; so I have every

reason to be patient and submissive, but I am far from that.

"I write more freely than I should, because I am to seal my letters to you. We are permitted to write so to absent teachers, and I rejoice in this mark of confidence towards you, whom they might regard as not a teacher if they chose. Give my love to Willy. I meant to write him a letter with this, but there is not time. I am more glad than I can tell that he is out of this place, and with you.

"Ever gratefully yours,

"RICHARD LANGDON."

If Dick could have heard the conversation of some of his schoolmates at the time he was writing his letter, he would have felt even less hope of escaping their malice.

"I say, Martin, have you forgot that thump in the face from Dick Langdon's hard fist?"

"If he has, I haven't," spoke in a pert youngster, commonly called "Jimmy;" "the way Peter's face looked the next three weeks is n't easily forgot;" and he giggled at his own recollection.

"Shut up!" retorted Martin, boxing Jimmy's ears. "You can bet though, fellows, that I remember Dick most affectionately!" and he set his teeth in hatred.

"He has a mighty lordly way of walking over all the small favors we shower upon him in the shape of dirty water, mud, brickbats, slits in clothing, lost books, boots, and hats; ghosts at his bedside, and other attentions too numerous to mention. No use to try to tease the life out of him that way; he's too tough."

"What then?" growled Martin.

"Get him into another scrape with the faculty of this mighty college," replied Aiken, the first speaker, one of the oldest and wickedest, but best educated boys in the school. "There is no Prof. Elton here now for him to come it over—the sly hypocrite—"

"Dick's no hypocrite; nobody believes that!" ventured little John.

"Not when he threw you over the pickets, like the dead lamb you thought yourself, till you found you could bleat for your ma on the other side. There was a streak of sincerity along there, eh! Johnnie?"

John was silenced but not convinced.

"What great good of getting him into a scrape with the teachers?" asked one; "it's a sight riskier for us, and no worse for him than what we've been doing."

"I'll tell you the good," replied Aiken: "Elton keeps petitioning, and word has come from

headquarters pardoning Dick out in two months, if the teachers report favorable then. If we want his most improving society any longer we must work for it."

"How?" again growled Martin, strong at hating, but weak at plotting his own vengeance.

"Make the teachers' reports unfavorable, and we have him," replied Aiken. "He'll feel that more than three hundred and sixty-five lickings."

"Let's hear your plans, Aiken."

"They're not matured yet," replied Aiken loftily, "but if you leave it to me to plan and direct, I'll bet my whiskers on bringing it out favorable as you'd wish for Dick Langdon." And Aiken complacently stroked a face, naturally handsome, but now spoiled by craft and cunning. He had an ambition somewhat like that of Milton's Satan to "reign in hell."

"How many months will it take your plans to mature, Aiken?" said Johnnie. "Maybe Dick will be gone before they come to a head."

"Possibly; meantime, boys, do your best, and when you want any help let me know," said Aiken, as he walked away. Jimmy followed him, mimicking his air and motions, stepping so lightly that Aiken did not perceive he was followed, and wondered at the explosion of laughter which followed his exit.

"Who wants to be lorded over by Tim Aiken?" said Jimmy, returning in high feather from following Aiken. "Let's get up a plan for ourselves."

"Plan away Jimmy! go it! Hurrah for Jimmy's plan! Let's hear it. Hear! hear! Let's have a speech, Jimmy!" came in subdued chorus from the boys who, although watched at a distance by a very sleepy and inefficient monitor, dared not be too noisy.

"Gentlemen and fellow students," commenced Jimmy, assuming, with a low bow, a speaker's attitude, "gentlemen and fellow students—ahem—I regret to announce to you that my very brilliant plans, like those of the illustrious Aiken, are not yet matured." And Jimmy stroked his fair chin in admirable caricature of Aiken. The outburst which followed this sally made the sleepy monitor look up, and Jimmy instantly assuming another attitude, and producing from his pocket a very innocent skipping-jack, of his own manufacture, began to display it as the ostensible cause of the merriment.

"Bring that here, Jim! Why are you always creating some noise or mischief? If you make any more disturbance I shall report you!" spoke up the monitor.

Jimmy, with a ludicrous air of meekness, gave

up the gay toy, and returning demurely to the group he had left, whispered,

"Now, boys, let's be as still as mice and have a good solemn talk while pussy goes to sleep. Hush ! that is n't worth laughing at; keep still, and listen to my plan, and we'll see if we can't mature it about as sudden as a thunder-shower. Really, I have got a plan, and Aiken has n't ; but if we go at it without him he'll upset our dish to spite us; so let's get him back and tell him it's just been hinted at to do so and so, but we can't without him, and he must be captain."

The rest agreed, and Jimmy brought back Aiken adroitly suggesting to him a scheme which he had long entertained but not with any reference to Dick.

"It may as well be that as anything," said Aiken condescendingly: what we have to mature is, how to put all the blame of it on Dick, and get him into trouble by it."

The boys had put their heads very close together, and they hereafter spoke so low that the monitor, who had been broken of his rest the previous night, actually did go to sleep, thus giving alert Jimmy and scheming Aiken an opportunity to make several arrangements in the school-room, very necessary for the bad business of the night.

Meantime, Dick, having finished his letter to

Mr. Elton, and his usual evening studies, thoughtfully read a chapter in his Bible, committed himself into his Heavenly Father's keeping, and went quietly to sleep in his hard bed, quite unconscious of the plottings of his enemies.

It was late in the night, and very dark, when he waked with the feeling that some one was near his bed, and expecting some tricks of the boys, he lay quite still, breathing as if asleep.

He felt the blanket very skillfully drawn away from between the quilt and sheet; felt his mattress raised by the slipping of a hand beneath it at the foot, then a stealthy step in the direction of his clothes, near the head of his bed.

"Watch coming on your side!" spoke the lowest possible whisper.

"Run with the things, and finish up quick: I'll skulk;" replied a whisper as faint; and a cautious step retreated on the dark side, while the approaching watchman's light revealed a dark figure creeping beneath Dick's cot.

"Look here, watchman," spoke Dick very quietly as the light came near, "I wish you'd oblige me by getting me another blanket; mine is gone, and I am cold: here is something, too, under my mattress which don't belong to me, and which I will thank you to carry immediately to Mr. Hawkins. There is, also, a boy under my

bed, who ought to have been in his own long ago !”

Jimmy was speedily dragged from under the bed, and led off by the watchman.

Dick was provided with another blanket, and folding it about him, quietly finished his night's sleep, while Jimmy's plan “matured like a thunder-shower,” under the eye of Mr. Hawkins.

CHAPTER XV.

DELIVERANCE FROM EVIL.

DICK was awakened the next morning by the usual rising-bell, from a sleep so sound that it took him a minute to collect his thoughts about the disturbances of the previous night.

Then he began to wonder what Jimmy and the boys could have been trying to do, and whether he had acted right in revealing Jimmy to the watchman.

Conscience said, "You were quite right, Dick. Boys who are prowling about for mischief at midnight should not be concealed and protected by the friends of peace and good order."

Dick felt cheerful as he listened to conscience, yet he braced himself to meet fresh persecution from his schoolmates as a consequence.

When he dressed, he discovered that his vest and handkerchief were among the missing, and on thoroughly searching his cot for them he found the handkerchief wrapped about a memorandum-book, with the name of Mr. Hawkins written upon the paper cover.

Dick had never found Mr. Hawkins ready to

believe his word, or in any way put confidence in him, and it was therefore with no little trepidation that he knocked at the door of his private room to deliver up the book.

"Mr. Hawkins opened his door in response to the knock, and fixed his eyes on Dick without saying a word, waiting for him to make known his errand, which he did by saying,

"I presume, sir, you received a key which I found last night under my mattress. This morning on removing the mattress, in search of my missing vest and handkerchief, I found this also wrapped in the handkerchief and I return it to you without having opened it."

"I suppose you know the book?"

"Yes, sir; it seems to be the note-book in which you keep memorandums of our department, and such matters."

"Did you find your vest?"

"No, sir."

"Your best course, Langdon, is to tell me, now, all you know of last night's scrapes."

"I know nothing whatever, Mr. Hawkins, except what I presume the watchman has already told you."

"Repeat all you know."

"I was awakened in the night by the presence of some one near my bed. It was too dark to

recognize any one. I pretended to be still asleep, and while lying thus felt my blanket drawn off, and my mattress raised as if a hand was thrust under it. Then I heard some one go to my clothes and move them. Just afterwards some one on the side away from the clothes whispered very low, 'Watch, coming on your side,' and the one near the clothes answered in the same faint whisper, 'Here, run with the things, and finish all up quick; I'll skulk.'

"The watchman's light appeared just as a boy was creeping under my bed. I felt under the mattress without getting up, and found a key which I handed the watchman, asking him to take it at once to you. I also told him that my blanket was gone, and that there was a boy hidden under my bed. He pulled him out and led him away. Another blanket was sent to me, and I wrapped up in it and went to sleep and did n't wake again till the rising-bell rang. When I dressed I missed my vest and handkerchief, and on searching my cot for them found my handkerchief wrapped round the book I have given you."

"Did you find anything else?"

"I did not."

"Did you know who was under your bed?"

"I did not until the watchman drew him out; then I saw that it was Jimmy."

"If this is all you have to say, you may go."

Dick felt that Mr. Hawkins had treated him like a gentleman in comparison with former interviews, but he feared that what the boys called "bottled thunder" was in store for him. He got a few minutes retirement, and read how meekly Christ bore false accusation, and prayed for strength to endure whatever was before him. Then he attended quietly to his usual tasks, avoiding all communication with others.

He was a little surprised to see Jimmy and all the boys at breakfast as if nothing had happened. But when he entered the school-room with the rest at the usual hour, the mystery of the mischief was solved.

Seated at the central desk was a very poorly-executed but truly ludicrous effigy of Mr. Hawkins, dressed incongruously in that gentlemen's very best broadcloth coat, and very worst pantaloons and hat, devoted to out-of-door use in hard storms. In his right hand he held uplifted the rod of chastisement, and in his left the memorandum-book returned by Dick.

All the teachers, except Mr. Hawkins, were in their usual places as the scholars filed into their seats, eyeing the absurd figure, some with amusement and curiosity, some with anxiety, and others with dismay.

"What will Old Hawk say and do?" was the question uppermost in most of their minds, while the perpetrators of the insult grew pale with terror at sight of the memorandum-book. Dick wondered at sight of it in that place, and while he bore up bravely, felt almost sure that Mr. Hawkins supposed him to be profoundly deceitful, as he did in the case of the cards, and would disgrace and punish him as the prime perpetrator of the gross insult.

The reader may as well know here what was not definitely stated in a previous chapter, that when Mr. Elton had been obliged to report Dick's violence to John, Mr. Hawkins had vented his pent up wrath towards him in a severe whipping. Dick's natural fortitude and a sense of remorse for his own fault had enabled him to endure as best such pain can be endured; but it will never be remembered without a shudder.

But innocent of the crime in question, he sat outwardly calm but deeply moved, awaiting issues which he expected would speedily consign him again to those merciless hands and destroy his last hope of release before the expiration of his term. Dick fortified himself by thinking, "'The way of transgressors is hard.' I am in this place for my sins, and I must expect to suffer in consequence. And I was the means of bringing Willy here too;

whatever I have to bear will be no more than I deserve."

But there was not very much time for Dick's bitter reflections to have their way before Mr. Hawkins came in, walked quietly up in front of his accustomed seat, and deliberately surveyed the effigy. One of the teachers rose and placed a chair for him near the desk. Without a "thank you" he pushed it aside saying,

"I will wait for my own seat; it wont take long to vacate it. Every one of you, who had a hand in this very shabby piece of work, step forward to undo it?"

No one responded to this call.

"So you think I don't know you! Think I was sound asleep all night while you were cultivating artistic talents in executing this striking statue! Now I will tell you candidly, I happened to wake up, and looked in here and saw you make it. Generally, as you all know, I'm a very mild man, but being broken of one's rest will make the gentlest man savage! You wont get another chance to own your own doing, which you very well know always dulls 'Old Hawk's' claws a trifle. Mr. Harding, you will find the names of these ambitious young artists on page fifteen of that note-book. Call them out here to receive due honors."

Mr. Harding took the book from the semblance of a hand which held it and read several names, beginning with Jimmy's and including Martin's and Aikin's, but not John's. They were obliged to come forward, one by one and face the school in a row. They were the real offenders, and of course Dick was not of the number. He truly pitied them, and forgave them, as he thanked God in his heart for deliverance, thus far, from the snares of his enemies.

"The head engineer of this sublime structure is at liberty to give his orders, and have it out of the way speedily. Each one undo what he did."

Very reluctantly the culprits began to undress the effigy, amid the laughter and derision of the school, which Mr. Hawkins encouraged instead of restraining.

"Just think!" he said, as one held the image while another struggled to get off the sleeves of the dress-coat, "think of the strain and exposure of that coat, which I assure the school cost more money than most of you ever honestly earned in your honored lives. Look out, Martin! If you tear it, you ought to know 'Hawk's claws can tear as well. Aiken, why do you let that raw-hide which I have given you reason to respect, lie dishonored in the dust? Give it here; I'll see it held in honor. There," as the old panta-

loons came off, "Is that the last of the things from my closet? Where, my nimble Jimmy, did you put the key of my closet last night?"

"Jimmy, in his terror, began twice over, "I do n't—" "I never put—"

"None of that," roared Mr. Hawkins, hitting him across the lips with the tip of the raw-hide."

"Each of you will have enough to answer for, without any lies. You need n't whine, nor blame the 'Hawk' for that. You'd have saved yourselves if you had taken a gentle hint on that head, which I threw away on all your hard heads when I called you out here. Now answer: Where did you put the key of my closet last night?"

"Under Langdon's mattress."

"What else did you put there?"

"Your note-book."

"What else?"

"Nothing. Oh, do n't! I only forgot about the handkerchief."

"How came you by his handkerchief?"

"Took it out of his pocket."

"When, and where?"

"Last night out of his clothes."

"Where was Langdon?"

"In his bed?"

"Had he anything to do with planning this affair?"

"Not as I know of. I—Oh! Ah!" The interjections of the English language fail to give the wail with which poor heedless Jimmy greeted a second lash across the lips administered for even an evasion of the truth.

"Now answer. Had Langdon been up with you last night?"

"No, sir."

"Did he have anything to do with planning this affair?"

"No, sir."

"What else did you take from beside Langdon's bed?"

"His vest."

"What did you do with it?"

"Gave it to the fellow that was with me."

"Who was with you?"

"Martin."

"Martin, hand over that vest to its owner; he feels the want of it this cold day almost as much as he did his blanket last night. The blanket comes first, does it? So I thought. Langdon, put on your vest. Take charge of the blanket too. Roll it up neatly for him, Martin, tie it up with one of those strings which you found came off your statue so much harder than they went on, and place it on his desk."

Martin had been obliged to rip up the body of

the effigy, which was made of the blanket, stuffed, among the stuffing was found the vest.

Dick's face bore a serious, almost troubled expression through these exciting scenes in which he had such a deep personal concern. He felt profoundly thankful at his own vindication, but not in the least exultant. He remembered that his own wicked intimacy with these boys and his attack upon Martin were, in some degree, the cause of all the trouble, and he did not rejoice in their suffering. When Martin approached his seat with the vest he rose and stepped forward to meet him, looking sorrowfully concerned, took it gently from his hand, removed his jacket and put on the vest with no change of expression, as if he were scarcely conscious of the act, but absorbed in earnest thought. From first to last of these scenes there was no approach to a smile upon his lips.

He was surprised to find and greatly respected the sense of justice which was very evident in Mr. Hawkins, and he wondered if he thought his apparent lack of all pity for those who had done wrong could possibly lead them to do better in the future. Such thoughts were cut short by another ringing question from Mr. Hawkins which concerned himself.

"Now, Master Jimmy, who 'can't tell a lie'—

here he snapped his whip significantly—"what was your object in prowling about Langdon's bed at midnight, putting stolen goods into his bed and carrying off his bedding and clothing? That's a long question, but I want a quick answer, and to the point."

"To lay it all on Dick, sir. But that was n't any of my doings at first; it was the big boys' planning, because they hate him."

"Yes; and because you like fun you let them make a cat's paw of you to do their worst work. The more fool you. Here is that key. Put all my things exactly where you found them. Look out for that coat. Martin, away with the rest of these duds!"

Kicking away a promiscuous heap of rags, straw, and paper, the stuffing of the figure, he took his seat, laying the rod with a resounding thud upon the outside of the desk as he said,

"These boys will remain after school; there's not time to settle with so many now." Then he commanded absolute order and opened the school as usual.

That evening Dick gave Mr. Elton the story of the effigy in a sort of journal-letter which he kept to send him weekly. To this account he added,

"I am sorry to know that the boys concerned

were all very severely punished, Jimmy, however, not so cruelly as Aiken, Martin, and the rest of the older ones. I presume they will all think that I rejoice, and will hate me more than ever; but they will hardly make such another weak attempt to get me into trouble. I am glad that previous to this last affair Mr. Hawkins had discovered who hid the cards in my bed. This I did not know until he sent for me to-day and said,

“‘Before this effigy scrape I had learned that you had no hand in that matter of the cards, and Mr. Elton did us both a good turn in keeping my hands off you at that time. You had always been “hail fellow” with the worst till about that time. Now the bad ones all hate you. Why is it?’

“‘I did not answer until he insisted; then I said,

“‘‘They liked me, Mr. Hawkins, till I began to try to do right.’

“‘‘You’re not likely to get much credit for trying to do right here. What’s your object?’

“‘You know what an eagle’s eye he has; it looked me through while he spoke, as if he wanted to know for a purpose.

“‘‘My object,’ I replied, ‘is to serve Christ, who died to save my soul, at least as faithfully as I have served Satan, who seeks to destroy it.’

“‘That is a laudable enterprise, Langdon,’ he replied. ‘I guess you ’ll hold out the remaining two months of your probation here. Two months after you get loose wont you write me a letter and tell me whether you are then serving Christ or Satan? I’d like to know for my own edification how you are holding out.’

“‘I answered very earnestly, ‘Mr. Hawkins, do you really mean that I may write you a letter two months after I get out?’

“‘Yes; only let it be honest. Do n’t put in even a “Dear Sir,” when I know that of course at heart you hate me for that unmerciful thrashing I gave you.’

“‘I do not hate you, Mr. Hawkins,’ I replied. ‘I deserved punishment; and even if I had not, I could n’t wish or even dare to hate you at heart.’

“‘Not dare?’

“‘No, sir. If I hate even an enemy, I turn the Lord’s Prayer into a curse upon myself when I repeat it.’

“‘Did Elton teach you that?’

“‘No, sir. He said I could not have learned it of him. It came so hard to me that I think only God could have taught me. But you were not one of the enemies. I never felt you were, except, perhaps, a little while that first day about the cards; and then I soon took you off the enemy

list, because you really thought me guilty, and I had given you reason to, by playing cards previously with the bad boys.'

" 'That sounds like candor and sound sense. Did you realize too that I should n't have thrashed you as I did simply for tossing that little monkey over the fence for his impudence? It was for old and new, but chiefly for persistent lying about the cards, of which you were quite innocent.'

" 'Yes, sir, I realized it, and that under the circumstances I ought not to expect you to believe me. It was very kind of you to follow it up and let me know that you learned the truth.'

" 'Not kind. I've nothing to do with kindness. I'd like to be as just as one can in such a place. But about that letter: write it, and mind you tell me truly whether you are serving God or the devil out of prison. Here is my full address. And, Langdon, I promise you that if you write I will answer you. And you need n't fear that Martin and Aiken and the rest of them will keep you here. I see through them. It's my vocation to see through everybody, and for my own information I'm trying to see through you.'

" 'Oh, Mr. Elton, do you think Mr. Hawkins can be asking himself if there is such a thing as heart change from evil to good?'

CHAPTER XVI.

ALL THINGS NEW.

It was New Year's Eve, a time for gladness, but Mrs. Langdon found it hard to be even cheerful. She had been almost sick for several weeks, with a succession of bad colds, which compelled her to give up the washing and ironing which she was accustomed to take in, and now that she was a little better, she found herself without money, almost without bread or fuel. To add to her cares she had not received her usual monthly letter from Dick at the reform school, and feared some evil had befallen him.

As the early darkness gathered, and Etta complained that she was cold and hungry, the mother made the last cup of meal into gruel over the scanty fire, and feeding the child, hushed her to sleep with a story and a song; then, overwrought by the effort, bowed her head and wept long and bitterly; not rebelliously, for her trembling trust still clung to her Heavenly Father's promises. Rising up, at last, she put on her shawl and hood and taking a small bundle went forth, locking the cottage door behind her. The bundle was a

garment for the making of which she was to receive one dollar, and it seemed to her that sorely as she had often needed money in the past, she had never needed a dollar so much as she did the price of that work.

"Is Mrs. Ashton in?" she inquired of the servant answering her ring.

"Yes, but she has company this evening," was the reply, in not very patient tones.

"I brought this work which should have been sent before; but I have not been well." Here Mrs. Langdon paused, blushed, hesitated, then bracing herself with the thought of her child, and a hungry morrow, added, "If it is quite convenient, I will wait for my pay."

"You'd better not wait; mistress is 'specially engaged to-night. She's sure enough, you know, to send your pay," was the reply.

Mrs. Langdon turned away without a word, and half blinded by starting tears, went homeward. She had just passed the railroad station when a train arrived, unheeded by her save that she thought, sadly, not bitterly, as she hurried on, "How busy and happy all the world but myself seems!" Then a hurrying step, in advance of all who had alighted from the train, came echoing behind her. The sound of that step thrilled her. It approached; a tall boy's figure hurried

past with a hasty glance, then paused and looked back.

"Dick! My son, my son!"

"Mother!"

He drew her arm within his, and when he found how she trembled, turned aside to let others pass and walked slowly towards the old home. Neither felt like speaking until they sat down, hand in hand, at the fireside.

"How is it with you, my boy?"

"All well, dear mother; do I look otherwise?"

She looked him over proudly. He had grown and improved, almost out of any knowledge but a mother's. Health of body, mind, spirit, was written unmistakably in the noble figure, and handsome, open countenance.

"You look as my own boy should. I was anxious because I did not hear as usual."

"I have been waiting to have a letter from you to answer, and I wanted to give you a glad surprise. I am pardoned out for reformation and good conduct. I have been hoping for this, and dared not tell you the hope; but I should have written to say I was well."

"It is all right, Dick. I am so thankful, that I know not what to do or say. All the welcome I can give you is a full heart. I went out to carry some work home for which a dollar is due me; if

they had only paid me I could have given you a supper."

"I received money to pay my fare home, and Mr. Elton lent me money to buy this suit of clothes. I walked all but the last ten miles, and have five dollars left. Is there any coal?"

"I think a hod full could be scraped up in the cellar, but I have no light, and the snow has stopped the windows so that I could not see even by day." Dick looked puzzled a moment and exclaimed,

"And you had not a penny left to buy a candle! Here is the old market basket; hug the fire, mother, and keep your shawl on until I come back."

He was back from the nearest store in five minutes, without the basket, but with candles, which speedily brought to light, materials for a good fire, and when he returned from a second walk to the store, bringing the basket filled with groceries, bread, milk and meat, he found the kettle singing over the fire and the table set for supper. Then, just as the beefsteak, toast and coffee were ready, Etta waked up, insisting it was morning, and coaxing to get up and eat breakfast with "Dit." When her mother, wondering at the instant recognition, asked her if Dick looked like Dick, she said,

"Yes, only more brother Dit than he used to be; what for did he stay 'way so long?"

"To learn to be good; to be more brother Dick than he used to be," replied the brother, with the soft arms about his neck. "If it is morning Etta must be dressed; let us see if Dick remembers how the little clothes go on."

So Dick's presence brought joy that New Year's Eve.

The next morning Dick went out in search of work, and returned at noon to say, very cheerfully that as he had supposed would be the case, people were rather shy of employing him, but that his old friend Ernest had got him a job at a dollar a day and board himself.

"We shall get along nicely on that and my earnings, Dick. Mrs. Ashton sent me that dollar and some more sewing this morning, and my customers are waiting for me to take in the washing and ironing again."

"You must not do that, mother, it is too hard."

"It is not too hard. Work does not hurt me, only I took that terrible cold from carelessly hurrying out to the lines, from over the steaming tub. If I don't hurry, and wrap up warm when I go out, I shall not suffer."

Dick had an unopened letter from Mr. Elton

which he sat down to read, but soon jumped up, exclaiming,

"Oh, mother, this is almost too good!"

"What is it, my son?"

"Mr. Elton wants us all to move to Lyme. There is a lack of boarding-places for the students, and a boarding-house has been furnished to be opened next term—in about four weeks—and he wants you to be matron: to superintend, you know, and have a salary. And I am to have a scholarship, my tuition and board free, only if I don't stand high enough in my class at the end of the first term I must lose it; but I sha' n't lose it!"

"You must go, but I fear I am not competent for such a position. Then Etta, you forget her."

"No; Mr. Elton says, 'I think that sunbeam, your little sister of whom you have told me, will be a welcome addition to the establishment; only we must all promise not to spoil her; and she can attend an excellent infant school we, fortunately, have here.' You have just the faculty for managing such a concern as that, mother, and as to Etta, she's never any trouble anywhere because you have taught her to take care of herself and never interfere with your duties."

"She is good; if she were not it would be in

vain for me to make the attempt. I believe I have the faculty for housekeeping. I will go and try it a term."

"He wants us as soon as we can conveniently come, so that you may get the housekeeping arranged before the term commences and I may have a little start in my studies. He seems ambitious to have me do well; and, mother, I mean to do my very best."

"How did you win such friendship from Mr. Elton?"

"I don't know, mother. I never could understand it. He trusted me when no one else could; and he says too that he was not Christ's disciple then, which makes it still stranger that he understood my new motives and desires."

"But he is trying to serve God now, is he not?"

"Yes. I don't understand some things he says to me. Let me read some words from one of his letters: 'Richard, I can never repay the debt of gratitude I owe you. You taught me—what, indeed, I am inexcusable for not having learned before—the power of Christianity to transform the heart and life; and the silent influence of the pupil was made effective in the teacher's mind and heart. I may do something for you in this

life: what you have done for me is for immortality.' ”

Mrs. Langdon's voice was not quite steady as she replied,

“That is easily understood, my son. In the soul's need of Christ there is no difference between one and another, for all have sinned alike.”

CHAPTER XVII.

ZEAL.

AT Lyme Richard Langdon was no longer known as "Dick," and the "Dick" of "Satan's Schools" was quite willing to lose himself in a better personality.

Etta's silvery tones, however, often rang through the halls of the boarding-house, calling, "Dit, Dit!" and as the pattering feet ran to meet him, the teachers and pupils liked the gleeful laugh of the usually sedate Richard as he carried the universal pet on his shoulder or tossed her up and caught her like the ball whose form she emulated.

There was one other who frequently so far forgot herself as to say "Dick"—the refined and lady-like mother, who won universal esteem as manager of the boarding-house. In the sweet content she felt at her lost boy's return, engaged in the engrossing duties which effectually diverted her mind from the bitter past, she renewed her youthful beauty and bloom, looking quite too young to be the mother of the tall, thoughtful student who called her by that dear name and

ever treated her with the tenderest affection and deference. This relationship she was sure to claim every time she inadvertently said "Dick" at the boarding-house table, at which she presided, by adding "My son," thus:

"Dick, my son, before the young gentlemen leave the dining-room, please get them to decide by ballot at what hour dinner shall be served on the next holiday."

The above sentence will give the boys a hint as to why Mrs. Langdon was very popular as "President" of the boarding-house, a term which they had given her, frequently addressing her as "Mrs. President." On the occasion just mentioned, when the ballot was about to be taken, in merry mood, after dinner Mr. Elton, who was a boarder, withdrew, after remarking with the utmost gravity that only the young gentlemen had been requested to vote.

Mr. Elton told Dick, playfully and confidentially, that he was only disappointed in one thing respecting his mother: she was too young and handsome to be termed a "matron!"

"Yes, mother was always beautiful, only sometimes pale and worn with care and misery and toil. I can never do enough to atone to her for the grief I gave her. It cheers me to see her look like herself once more. But she is not very

young: she is thirty-five. She was married at eighteen, and I am sixteen."

"And I am thirty-six. You are very inconsistent, Richard, for you and all the rest would have detained me to vote as a young gentleman! Seriously, I look a great deal older than your mother, don't you think so?"

"Indeed, I do n't, Mr. Elton, although I'm sure I never should have thought of comparing your ages. The question of your age never occurred to me; it never does in those I honor; but you may be sure mother and all of us classed you with the young gentlemen. We sha' n't let you off again."

Mr. Elton was pleased with Dick's answer, and Dick wondered that so great a man as the principal, with so many weighty matters on his hands, should do his mother the honor to notice either her youth or beauty. He had expected him to notice, with reference to the interests of the school, that she was cultured, refined in manner, and, withal, a good financier and house-keeper.

Dick studied hard, and took the first place in his class by such decided superiority that no one thought of competing with him or questioning his right to the honor. In fact, he was doing two years' work in one, expecting to be promoted to a

higher class the next term. It was not so much ambition to excel which incited him as the repentant thought often expressed to Mr. Elton when he urged him to spare himself,

"I have wasted so much precious time! How can I ever retrieve it?"

In his zeal for study he did not forget Christ. Willy, who was in the school, was very helpful to him as a Christian. Mr. Elton had found Willy a home in a religious family where he could have his board for services which he rendered. He was so much more helpful than was expected, especially in vacation, that his clothes also had been provided, without expense to Mr. Elton, who would cheerfully have given them.

Willy was with a younger class in his studies, but was one with Dick in his Christian experience and influence. In a very quiet way they both assisted Mr. Elton in ascertaining who of the students hoped they were Christians, or desired to be such. Then a school prayer-meeting was formed: Dick and Willy were always there, ready to take part in it, and their hearty "Come with us," influenced the hesitating ones to join the prayerful band. Very quietly, but firmly, decidedly, even zealously, their influence was ever on the Lord's side.

Willy's gratitude to Dick for letting him be

the one to go first with Mr. Elton was as unbounded as was Dick's to him for leading him to Christ, and a friendship thus cemented was likely to be as enduring as existence; for neither of them felt that even death would sunder the ties that bound them. Willy would not tell Dick how he learned of the sacrifice he made in his behalf. He only said Mr. Elton did not tell him; but when Dick asked the Principal how he supposed Willy found it out, he laughed; yet said in a tone of concern,

"Really Richard, I did mean to keep your generous secret, but when the dear boy begged to see your letters, I could n't refuse him, and carelessly gave him one which revealed it."

While Dick did not in his zeal as a student forget his promises to his Saviour, there was one promise which he would perhaps have failed to remember had not Mr. Elton said to him,

"Richard, have you forgotten Mr. Hawkins?"

"Thank you for reminding me: I had forgotten that I promised to write to him. What shall I say?"

"You are to tell him, are you not, whether you are serving Christ or Satan? I trust it is not with you, as with so many, a doubtful question."

Promptitude was one of Dick's virtues, and the next mail bore his letter.

"LYME ACADEMY, March 5, 18—

"MR. HAWKINS: My Dear Sir,—You will remember that I had your permission to write to you, two months after my release from the Reform School. I was to tell you whether I was then serving Christ or Satan. I think I can say, with a clear conscience, that I am serving God. It is my purpose, my hourly endeavor; and I pray that the purpose and endeavor may endure forever.

"Perhaps I should not say more than to answer the question you desired. For your kind judgment of those last two months, and your favorable report to the managers of the institution, I cannot sufficiently express my gratitude.

Most respectfully,

RICHARD LANGDON."

Mr. Elton, all unknown to Dick, sent Mr. Hawkins a letter speaking very fully of the entire change religion had wrought in Dick's character.

If Dick had been embarrassed in keeping his promise to write to Mr. Hawkins, that gentleman was much more perplexed in keeping his promise to reply. After a good deal of inward strife, which he felt he would not have any one know, he sat down quite in a rage with himself, dashed off the following, and mailed it without pausing for reflection.

"STATE REFORM SCHOOL, March 7, 18—

"RICHARD LANGDON: You kept your promise, and I keep mine. In fact, I more than keep it when I assure you it is my firm conviction that I have been serving Satan ever since I was born, and am serving him still, and shall serve him as long as I exist. It is useless for you, or any other being, to seek for me a different destiny. It is a bad service, and I congratulate you that you are out of it; but I love it. You owe me no thanks.

"Sincerely yours,

ROBERT HAWKINS."

Dick, when weak and helpless, had felt the grind of the iron heel of this bad man's power, and deep in his heart were cut ineffaceable memories of unjust suspicions and cruel taunts. But he had forgiven all unasked, even before Mr. Hawkins did him any justice, and when he read this letter his heart went out in a strong, yearning desire that its words might prove false. They moved him deeply, and moved him to hope, not despair. He desired to show Mr. Elton the letter, and ask his sympathy and prayers for the man who felt that prayer for him was vain; but he regarded such a letter—a letter alluding to the inner life—as too sacred a trust to be placed in any hand but his to whom it was addressed. (Would it not be well for every Christian to be as tenderly consid-

erate in this matter?) Dick regarded it as a hopeful circumstance that Mr. Hawkins felt he was in the power of evil and likely to remain in it forever. He thought,

"It is just the truth; is it possible that the Holy Spirit is showing it to him?"

It was no transient sentiment of good natured well-wishing that Dick felt for his former enemy, but an abiding, importunate desire that God would interpose to turn him from "the power of Satan unto God," and neither his studies, nor any other personal interest, quenched that desire. It followed him by day, lay down with him at night, and rose up with him in the morning. One morning, when it had thus risen with him, he spoke of it to Mr. Elton, with whom he was walking before breakfast.

"Mr. Elton, if you were followed by day and night, in every interval of leisure, by a strong desire for the spiritual welfare of a certain person, whom you had no personal reason to love, what would you think it meant?"

"I should hope it meant the Spirit was influencing that person's soul, and influencing mine to plead for its conversion. I have been feeling just so about one we know."

"So have I."

"Who is it, with you?"

"Mr. Hawkins. Who with you?"

"Mr. Hawkins."

"Then two of us were agreed touching something we should ask. Let us claim that promise, and pray together," and from the shelter of the budding willows rose the importunate, united prayer of two hearts for a forgiven enemy.

A month later Mr. Elton and Richard received in one envelope the following letters:

"STATE REFORM SCHOOL, April 15, 18—

"MR. EDWARD ELTON: My Dear Sir, You have invited me to visit you at Lyme. I accept your kind invitation, and will try to be with you on Saturday next, to spend the Sabbath.

Very truly yours,

"ROBERT HAWKINS."

"MY DEAR LANGDON: That *forever* in Satan's service is too terrible even for me. I am trying to get on Christ's yoke, but mine is a stiff neck. Some words I must say to you and Mr. Elton may be helpful in bending a stiff neck, and breaking a hard heart. Pray that it prove so.

"Sincerely,

ROBERT HAWKINS."

Mr. Elton and Richard clasped hands in thankfulness, thinking "the heart that prompted these words is already broken."

CHAPTER XVIII.

GRACE TRIUMPHANT.

"I AM here," said Mr. Hawkins, refusing a seat in Mr. Elton's room, and walking the floor in evident mental conflict.

"I thank you that you are here," cried Mr. Elton, stopping the man in his walk and offering him both hands.

Mr. Hawkins clasped his own behind him.

"I can't do it, Mr. Elton; I can't give you even one hand!"

"Why not?"

"Why not, indeed! Because I am a fiend, but not a hypocrite. I hate goodness and good people. I love evil. I do not love God or his service or his servants. I am alive for the first time to the misery of such a state. I wish I could strike myself out of being. If killing myself would do that—" He set his teeth fiercely.

"It would not: your endless being is inevitable. God, who has created you—"

"Will not let me go out of being if I desire it; yet you say, 'God is love!'"

"Yes, 'God is love.' His anger is love, his

justice is love, his wrath is love, his immutability is love. We must not mistake love for pity or tenderness. God is pitiful and tender, but while he is all love, he is not all pity and tenderness. His love punishes sin with suffering, rewards holiness with bliss. The sinner has every reason to tremble that God is changeless love, for that love condemns sin and the sinner."

"There is no help for me in all that."

"Surely not; there is no help for you anywhere until you cease fighting against God for giving you the being which he created for bliss, not woe."

"If he created me for bliss, why does he not accomplish in me his purpose?"

"You will not let him. He made your will free, even to the extent that it may resist his respecting you. He is 'not willing that any should perish,' yet you may perish if you will, and the Spirit will not always strive to prevent it. But this fierce conflict within you shows that he is now striving."

"Then you truly think God desires my salvation?"

"Assuredly. While his love makes you wretched in your rebellion, his pity weeps over you, crying, 'Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life!'"

“‘Will not come?’ ‘Will not come unto me that ye may have life?’” He repeated the words questioningly, seating himself with forced calmness as he did so.

“Yes, those are God’s words, and they are the very spirit of God’s will towards impenitent sinners, as revealed to us in the Scriptures. God, who made mankind in holiness, would be his Saviour from the sin into which he has fallen and which he persists in choosing. God, in Christ, stands with outstretched hands of mercy, while he cries to us sinners, ‘Come, come, come unto me!’ ‘Ye will not come!’ ‘How oft would I have gathered you . . . and ye would not!’ ‘I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded!’”

“What is the rest of the passage? There is a denunciation.”

“I meant not to speak of that now. The rest is only for those who refuse to listen to the voice of Wisdom. You must not refuse.”

“Let me hear the consequences. I remember it only vaguely.”

Mr. Elton turned to the passage and read it:

“‘Because I have called and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded, but ye have set at naught all my counsel and would none of my reproof, I also will laugh at your ca-

lamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind, when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me.' "

"That is just," said Mr. Hawkins thoughtfully.

"Yes, God is love, but he is not all mercy. His love becomes justice in wrath to the sinner who, rejecting all the overtures of mercy, will not come to God for the gift of eternal life which he offers. There is no escape from your Creator's power and rule, and although he now calls, he will not always call."

"You put God's character in a new light to me, Mr. Elton. It claims my respect. I should use a stronger word, but perhaps cannot. I will ponder these things. Give me a room alone a little while."

"Your bedroom is ready; but you have not eaten. Come down with me now to the dining-room, for as you are feeling you will not wish to meet the students at tea."

"Would you have me stop to eat while these momentous interests are pending? My whole being is shaken; food would choke me. Give me a glass of water and show me my room."

Mr. Elton complied without a word of remonstrance. Then he called Dick to his room.

"Richard, go and ask Mr. Ashton to take my place at supper, and ask your mother to excuse us both; then come up here. We have other work than eating and drinking just now." When Dick returned he said,

"You know Mr. Hawkins has come. His whole being is stirred. He cannot eat, for mental and spiritual conflict. It is the crisis of his being. We will pray for him."

At nine o'clock Mr. Elton ventured to knock at Mr. Hawkin's door, and he opened it, looking white and stern, with bright, tearless eyes.

"Can I do anything for you, body or spirit?" asked Mr Elton.

"I fear not. No one can help me. Nothing can avert my destiny. 'The way of transgressors is hard.' 'The wages of sin is death.'"

"'But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ.'"

"Does it say that?"

"See for yourself."

Mr. Elton turned to the passage, "For the wages of sin is death: but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord," leaving the Bible open at the place. On the same table stood a tray with the untasted supper which had

been sent up. Glancing at it Mr. Elton said, "Try and eat; exhaustion of body is not favorable in this battle for eternal life."

Mr. Hawkins glanced contemptuously at the supper, saying, "It would choke me!" He did not ask Mr. Elton to stay, yet he lingered, reluctant to leave him, and said, "You speak of a dreaded destiny. Perhaps you have some mistaken idea of its nature which is an obstacle."

"No; I care not to ask its nature. What I now feel is hell enough to justify the language of the Bible. The unquenchable fire, the undying worm are the inevitable consequence of the eternal growth of the sin that is in me."

"Then you do not charge your Maker with injustice, as you did an hour ago?"

"No. Neither, I suppose, do the inhabitants of hell. The fact that I see God's justice brings me no nearer to him."

"Yes, it is the first step, and a long one too; rather, it is a leap over a barrier which thousands never pass. Now look at his mercy in Christ. If God has come down to earth, clothed in humanity, to make the impossibility of the sinner's salvation possible, will you not avail yourself of the one only way? 'There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.'"

"I have not viewed it in that light. If I could feel that God came! I seem to grasp something there that might avail."

"You are right: you must grasp the thought of your Maker as your Redeemer. 'The Word was God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.' God the Creator came in Christ, 'reconciling the world unto himself.'"

Mr. Hawkins held up his hand as a signal for silence. "Leave it right there," he said; "let me think of only that."

Mr. Elton left instantly. At midnight there was a gentle rap at Mr. Elton's door, and Mr. Hawkins entered, finding his friend still up, for he had watched and prayed. This time Mr. Hawkins extended both hands.

"Help me if you can," he cried. "I see that God is love, even in my condemnation. I see there is mercy, pardon, salvation if I could and would do my part. 'What must I do to be saved?'"

" 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' "

"What is it to believe on him?"

"To trust him."

"It is not plain to me."

"You find yourself a sinner, and, in consequence, justly lost to all good now and for ever?"

"I do; I know it and I feel it."

"You feel that you cannot save yourself?"

"Yes; I feel that no one but God who made me is able to save me: that he will not, cannot, unless I believe."

"You are willing to receive salvation as his free gift, and to take it just as he bids you?"

"Yes, if I could only understand his will."

"His will is that you believe; that you trust his promise that for Christ's sake he will pardon the worst sinner that ever in penitent sincerity begs for mercy in that name—that only name."

"Do you mean that belief in Christ is simply trusting him to save the guilty soul he has died to redeem?"

"Yes. At Christ's feet plead for salvation from your sin. Then take him at his word in his promises of pardoning mercy. To refuse to trust him is the only unpardonable sin, unbelief."

"Is it possible that this tremendous interest hangs upon an act so simple?"

"You are in the raging sea, sinking to your death. The life-boat approaches; a hand is stretched out within your reach. You may grasp it, and live; you may not grasp it, and die. It is very simple and unspeakably momentous."

After a minute of deep thought Mr. Hawkins rose, and kneeling, prayed in broken language for God's pardoning mercy in Jesus Christ, to him the chief of sinners. Finding that Mr. Elton, who was kneeling with him, did not pray, he turned to him, saying, "Why do you not pray for me?"

Mr. Elton prayed. When they arose the fire of those fierce eyes was quenched in penitent tears.

CHAPTER XIX.

PATIENT CONTINUANCE.

THE school at Lyme prospered, increasing in numbers and in public favor. Yet Mr. Elton was not satisfied with the fruit of his labors; for while his earnest endeavors to instruct his pupils in the literary course were crowned with success, he feared that all his prayers and efforts to make it a school for Christ were fruitless. In his zeal and ardor he forgot that right religious teaching ever must, and will, like the hidden leaven, work its own results. "My word shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

During the second term of Dick's connection with the school, he became absorbed in his studies to an excess which led him to become comparatively indifferent to spiritual things, a change which Mr. Elton felt although he could find nothing in outward conduct to disapprove. One evening when they were alone, he said,

"Richard, you do not express to me that in-

terest respecting the salvation of the students which you did formerly."

"It is not in my thoughts, Mr. Elton, as it was last term. My studies engross me. Then I prayed for the conversion of all the students, and very earnestly for several in particular, who came occasionally to our prayer-meeting, but not one of them became permanently changed, and my zeal has gradually died out; our meeting, too, has diminished in numbers and interest."

"How many were present at the last meeting?"

"I am sorry to say that I allowed an unusually hard Greek lesson to keep me away; indeed, to be quite sincere, lessons not unusually difficult have often kept me, it seemed so little use to go. Willy, who is always there, reported only four present."

"Zeal in study is a good thing, Richard; a teacher is usually the last to find fault with it; but—I will only ask you to converse with your Saviour on this point."

"A word spoken in due season, how good is it!" Our zealous young student had not gone so far from Christ that he could not find his way back, and the conversation with the unseen Friend produced results.

Very quietly Dick sought out, one by one, the

absent members of the school prayer-meeting, and confessing to them his own negligence, invited them to be present at the next meeting. When the evening came, Willy, who had known nothing of Dick's recent feelings and movements, was surprised by the attendance of a larger number than he had seen for weeks. Just as the hour of prayer was drawing to a close, one of the youngest boys present, who had never confessed himself to be a Christian, rose and said he had hoped the previous term that he was beginning a religious life, but losing the degree of interest he then felt, had relinquished that hope; but he now was resolved to seek Christ until he found him, and he wished they would pray for him before they separated. The student having charge of the meeting requested Dick to lead in prayer. It was a very broken prayer, more, for pardon for himself than for any one else. When Dick rose from his knees, there was scarcely a dry eye in the room; the meeting was protracted half an hour, which was spent in mutual confession and consecration. This meeting was followed by a state of awakened religious interest in the school, very favorable for Christian effort, and Mr. Elton rejoiced in welcoming one after another of his pupils as fellow-travellers in the heavenward journey. Dick said to him one day,

"I will never allow myself again to feel that prayer and Christian effort for others are vain."

"When did you feel so?"

"At the close of last term, and the beginning of this, when no one of the boys for whom I had most hoped seemed to manifest a settled purpose to serve God. I became disheartened, and gave up my religious work, more on that account than any other; yet nearly all for whom I then labored are now sincerely interested."

"I do not blame you for your discouragement, Richard; it was natural, and I felt too much so myself; but the true way, doubtless, is to work right on, leaving the results with God, who alone can give them. 'In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.' I hope we shall both remember the lesson, but I fear we may forget it even after many teachings; it is a hard lesson, very hard."

"Why, Mr. Elton, I don't feel that I can ever forget it."

"I do not like to damp your enthusiasm, but it will be remarkable if this experience proves sufficient to teach you the difficult lesson of patient continuance in well-doing, without regard to apparent results. It is a hard lesson to learn."

Enthusiastic Richard did not, perhaps, give the heed he should to these reiterated counsels of one older and wiser than himself, for soon after the commencement of the next term he said to his teacher,

"How discouraging it is that so many of the boys appear to have lost the religious interest which they seemed to possess at the close of last term."

"The change is perhaps more apparent than real; there is not, now, so much to draw out expressions of their feelings. However that may be, remember *you* are to go right on, laboring and praying all the same, whether you do or do not see results."

"Ah! Mr. Elton, the lesson is harder than I thought it," faltered Dick.

"I do not think you have lost any genuine interest, or that many of the others have lost it beyond recall. Attention has been diverted during vacation, and the special glow of spiritual enthusiasm has passed; but the fruit of that enthusiasm remains deep in the heart of every true Christian. Now your work and mine is not to drop back into a life which does not regard the reality of these things, but by still speaking to one and another of them, to quicken our own life and that of others, and while we continue to sow

new seed, watch patiently the slowest growth of that already sprung up: for of some, even of the good seed, it says, 'some thirty fold.' "

Thus encouraged, Dick patiently continued his labors for Christ, and found, much to his gratification, that in almost every instance a sincere desire to lead a religious life still existed in the hearts of those who had expressed it the previous term. That awakening was the dawn of a brighter spiritual day in the school at Lyme.

The following extract from a letter received by Mr. Elton from Mr. Hawkins, will show that through him Dick's influence was still felt at the Reform School.

"With this new purpose to serve God, I felt at first that I must leave this place and seek a new field of labor, but second thought taught me rather to stay and do my best here. I am trying to make this a Reform School in something besides the name, a school for Christ, without whom I fear there is little reform deeper than the surface."

"Does it trouble you to remember your stay at the Reform School?" asked Mr. Elton of Dick.

"Oh, no! It was a favorite school of Satan, but it proved Christ's school to me, thanks to Willy's teaching."

"And to me, thanks to yours," added Mr. Elton.

"I never can understand why you say that."

"It was even so my boy, although you knew it not, and meant it not; we are all teachers for Christ or Satan, even if we do not realize the fact. 'He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad.'"

CHAPTER XX.

CONTRITION.

DICK often spoke of Willy, as in the conversation which closes the last chapter, alluding to the gratitude which he owed him. He had also frankly confessed to Mr. Elton that he considered himself the means of leading him into the bad ways and society which brought him to the Reform school. Mr. Elton, Dick and his mother took counsel together over Willy's interests and mutually pledged themselves to make his education, support and establishment in business their care.

Willy called himself happy at Lyme, was very diligent and proficient in his studies, and manifested such an affectionate and gentle spirit that it never ceased to be occasion for wonder to Dick that such a boy could ever have gone so far astray. He expressed this wonder one evening to Mr. Elton, who replied,

"I'm sorry to grieve you by saying it, Richard, but I must remind you of the truth; you made use of these very traits of his character to lure him into evil. You, who have the stronger

will and whose bolder qualities were his admiration, flattered him and won his love, giving him yours in return, and thus he followed you into sins which did not in themselves attract him. Then in the city, amid the desolation of his lost home, he found no friend but Satan's emissaries, who led him almost unresisting, putting him to every most dangerous use, so that he was sent to the Reform school for being implicated in their crimes rather than as having committed any of his own. These facts I learned when seeking his release."

Mr. Elton said no more, because he saw that Dick had bowed his head upon the table at which they sat. He put his hand caressingly upon the bowed head, saying,

"Do n't grieve over it to the forgetfulness of present duty. God has overruled it for your good and mine; we will never see Willy lack either love or comfort."

Dick raised his head with tears, which he was ever slow to shed, upon his cheeks. Taking the hand which had caressed him, he kissed it and said,

"Why have you never reproached me for not sorrowing enough over the sins of those evil years?"

"Richard, 'It is Christ that justifieth, who is

he that condemneth?" We should remember the past enough to make us humble, prayerful for ourselves, merciful and tender to the erring, while in one sense we forget the things that are behind, in pressing forward."

But thoughts of harm done to his beloved Willy had stirred deep fountains in Dick's soul, and to comfort him Mr. Elton said,

"I did not mean to wound you so deeply. While I would not have you seek excuses for yourself, I can hardly forbear saying that I find many for you. One is that you never knew a father's care and discipline."

"And Willy, who had a fond Christian father, says his last act towards him was one of disobedience, and that he dreams sometimes of seeing him and asking his forgiveness, and weeps to find it only a dream."

"His father's and mother's prayers for their son are answered, Richard. Tell him I said the thought of that should give him peace."

"Mr. Elton, I need a father's care and discipline still. I wish you would consent to bestow them. I will promise to render you love, deference and obedience."

Dick was surprised by Mr. Elton's response or rather lack of response, to his request. Instead of replying he blushed and smiled and seemed

embarrassed, which was very unusual. Then he put his arm tenderly over Dick's shoulder, which was also unusual. At last he said,

"You know I love you, Richard, and as I'm your teacher, you may render me as many of the good things you have mentioned as you can. About the sonship we'll speak at a future time."

Mr. Elton looked so youthful with the flush still in his cheeks and that peculiar smile on his lips and in his eyes that Dick said,

"Excuse me, sir, wont you? I didn't know what I was asking. It can't be I suppose. I only wish it could."

Then Mr. Elton laughed outright, which so astonished Dick that he rose and said he must go to his studies, and Mr. Elton gravely remarked that he too must be at work! Then as Dick was going off, not a little worried lest he had done something improper, Mr. Elton called him back saying,

"Give me a good-night kiss, Richard." So they kissed each other for the first, but by no means for the last time.

After that evening Dick was more watchfully tender to Willy than ever, and he in return clung yet closer to him.

"I've nobody else to love, Richie;" (this name was Willy's own peculiar substitute for "Dick;")

"only of course I have Mr. Elton, who is n't really mine; and you're not really mine either, but I feel more as if you were; I may call you my Richie may n't I?"

"Yes, indeed you may! You are my brother if you like. Oh, Willy, I often think if we had money, and were both going to college, that you would be a freshman when I was a sophomore, and that I should perhaps get expelled for fighting my classmates when they undertook to 'haze' you! But you may be sure I would n't mind running the risk could we but go! As neither of us can, we'll have each other here now, and we'll try and plan always to be near each other."

Willy's acquiescence was rather faint; he felt that his "Richie" would in some way get to college, while he never should, and that Dick's sphere would be so far above his own as to separate them.

Dick, who did not understand his sadness, asked,

Willy, do they care for you, love you I mean, where you live."

"They are very kind to me," answered Willy.

Dick knew, then, that they were only kind, and that Willy's heart still ached for the love of near kindred.

Not very long after this conversation, when Dick one day brought the letters from the post-office, at school recess, there was one in Mr. Elton's care, for Willy.

"Call him into a recitation-room, and give it to him;" said Mr. Elton: "I hope some good friend has remembered him."

Dick left Willy in a little room not often used, alone with his letter.

Several minutes after recess had closed, Willy, never before known to be absent from his seat at such a time, came from the little room into the school-room, his face disfigured with weeping, and going straight to Mr. Elton's desk laid the open letter before him, and without a word slipped away to his seat, and taking a book turned to his lesson.

Mr. Elton wrote "excused" opposite the tardy mark he had been obliged to give Willy, and put the unread letter in his pocket, till he could find time for it.

"Oh," thought Dick, greatly troubled, "can it be that my poor Willy's letter brought him fresh sorrow!"

Mr. Elton took an opportunity to request both of them to remain in their seats when school was dismissed, and as soon as all the rest had left they went to him unbidden.

"Oh, Richie," cried Willy, "look glad! be glad, not troubled! It's such news! Oh, Mr. Elton!"

"Yes, dear Willy," said Mr. Elton, with a tremor in his voice, "I have read it, and I'm thankful to God for your sake, to the very bottom of my heart."

"What is it?" cried Dick, "what can it be, to make you both like this!"

Mr. Elton felt for the letter, but Willy drew Dick down to him, and hugged him about the neck, and said to him half in whispers for lack of voice.

"Father is alive! An outward bound ship picked him up, nearly insensible, floating on something, and he's well now, and has just got home from abroad where the ship took him. He's coming here to-night."

Willy hid his face on Dick's shoulder, as his suppressed tears flowed afresh, and neither of the three cared to try his voice in speech for a few minutes. Then Mr. Elton handed Dick the letter, saying,

"You and Willy can read it together. There is more good news besides the fact that Willy's father is alive; but that makes the rest seem of little account." And he left them alone with each other.

Dick read the letter, and learned that it was in saving the life of a wealthy ship-owner that Mr. Goodwin was supposed to have perished. That this man, on learning that his preserver was living, had given him twenty thousand dollars by investing it, in Mr. Goodwin's name, in such a way that he could not refuse it, making him his partner as managing owner of several vessels.

"This means," said Dick joyfully, "that your father is a rich man, and on the road to greater wealth. He was a gentleman always, even when he was very poor."

"Yes, and always so good!" added Willy. He would not have had Dick know for a great deal that his thoughts went back, at the moment, to his father's kind act in giving him, from his almost empty purse, twenty-five cents to add to his strawberry money, and to his own unconfessed sin which was his first serious departure from the road of virtue. Oh, how much of sorrowful confession he had to breathe upon the bosom of his loving father, who knowing all about his dear boy's sad wanderings had only written him words of encouragement and tenderness! It is not strange, that over his joy, tears for a time had the mastery.

"Oh! come, Willy boy, cheer up!" said Dick at last. "You do n't want your father to find you

sick. Think of it, you are the one who can go to college, and do anything you want to."

"Yes, I had n't thought," cried Willy starting up almost joyfully, "Father will be willing, I am sure. You shall go first, and I, when I am fitted."

Dick shook his head in decided negative. "I could n't let him do that, Willy: do n't you ask him. If I am to go, there will be some other way."

"But Richie, think how much you've done for me!"

"Sometimes I do," said Dick remorsefully.

"Always taking my part, and being the one to stay there, to let me come here with Mr. Elton, and everything," added Willy.

"My generous Willy! You're forgetting what brought you to that place."

"No, Richie, I do n't forget the sins which brought me there. But God has forgiven them, and so will father: I feel sure he will."

"Ah, Willy! you are forgetting what I can't, and do n't wish to if I could, that I need your father's forgiveness more than you do!"

CHAPTER XXI.

SAFETY.

THE second year at Lyme glided by as school years glide, being gone almost before we realize they are half over, and Dick, having completed the course, was prepared to enter either college or a business life.

He longed to continue the education which seemed to his eager mind only fairly begun; but he kept that desire to himself, never having expressed it to any one but Willy, who faithfully kept a promise, which Dick had coaxed him into making, never to reveal the fact to any one. His reason for thus smothering his own preference was that, being destitute of means, he felt that he ought to seek some position which would at least support him, instead of casting upon his mother not only the burden of her own and Etta's maintenance, but that of helping him for years in a hard struggle for a collegiate training, which might leave him no nearer than at present to any pecuniary resource.

He was a little surprised that Mr. Elton, in all the freedom of their intercourse, which had be-

come more and more intimate, never mentioned the subject of his future beyond the academy course. Near the close of the last term Mr. Elton asked him one evening, somewhat abruptly, if he had laid any plans for the future; or had any settled wish or purpose respecting it.

"I am glad you have mentioned the subject," replied Dick, "for I want your advice. I must choose some paying business and try to find immediate employment in it. You, who know me best, and who take such kindly interest in my welfare, are my best counsellor."

"'Kindly interest' is a cold word between us, Richard; but I will advise you none the less warmly. Go to college for the purpose of culture, leaving the choice of your vocation to the maturer judgment of the future."

"I should like it, oh, so much, Mr. Elton! and I could accomplish it, doubtless, in time. I would not mind delay or struggle or hardship for myself, but for mother's sake I must not allow myself to attempt it. There are many shorter roads to useful and honorable employment. My mother and sister are a sacred charge."

Mr. Elton looked happy and as if he were very much pleased with Dick, as he replied,

"True, my own Richard. You might well sacrifice your longing for further culture to secu-

ring the happiness of such a woman as your mother, or, indeed, of any mother, were it necessary. I like your spirit; but, as I should have told you earlier, the offering is not needed."

"But I think it is, Mr. Elton."

"You will not think so when I tell you that I regard you even now as my son, and that it is my wish to gratify your desire for a liberal education. As you are constituted, it will promote your usefulness and happiness. If you loved study less, I should not advise it, being no friend to forcing unwilling minds through the labor of a protracted literary course. You will look to me for the means. Your talents and faithfulness will secure you a scholarship at college; the rest I can easily meet."

"Mr. Elton, this is too much from one upon whom I have no claim: one to whom I already owe more than I can ever repay. I must show my gratitude for the past by taking my future support upon myself. Don't urge me or tempt me, for I must, indeed I must!"

"*My son* will not feel so. Why, Richard, my boy, you look terribly puzzled, when usually you are so keen at guessing! And I expected her to tell you when it was fully settled, some weeks ago. Others know; and the wedding outfit is being made, or is made—I hardly know which, get-

ting ready for school examination has engrossed me so. I've been expecting your congratulations after my long probation. The day is set: the first Wednesday of vacation."

Our bright Dick was utterly bewildered still, and Mr. Elton looked happy, amused, and embarrassed—just so far, I mean, as an expressive face can look three things at the same time.

"Do pity my stupidity," said Dick. "I have been getting ready for examination too. I do congratulate you, since you are happy. But who is the lady? and what can it have to do with my being your son and going to college?"

"No, I'm not going to tell you. I'm not in the habit, am I, of solving your problems for you? But listen now, and I will again state the problem which I have given you to solve. I do n't usually have to state one twice to you, but you are very dull to-night. If I am to be married, and you are to be my son, who is to be the bride? If you can't solve so simple a problem as that, having but one unknown quantity, you must—"

Mr. Elton never finished his sentence, because Dick came to him with such a radiantly-glad, yet serious face, and with both hands outstretched to clasp his, that he was constrained to drop his pleasantry and be thoroughly in earnest. Dick stood with both Mr. Elton's hands in his own,

and, looking straight into his eyes, said the very last thing that his teacher, with all his knowledge of his character, would have expected:

"Mr. Elton, are you sure that you love my mother?"

"Richard, she is the first and the only woman I ever loved. When I first told her the fact and asked her to be my wife, she was utterly surprised and said she had never thought of such a possibility and could not answer such an unexpected question. So I have, because she wished it, cheerfully waited a year to test our knowledge of our own hearts. Yes, I am sure!"

"She is worthy even of you, Mr. Elton. Yet I am so surprised that I can't realize or express my joy!"

"And you are willing I should send my son to college?"

"Yes; I'm glad to owe you anything, everything. If ever a father had a dutiful son, you shall have one in me!"

"I ask more than that of my son."

"Can I give you more love as my father than is yours already?"

"Oh, yes, if I deserve more. Love's growth is limitless."

Then they conversed long and earnestly of the future, and in all that was said Mr. Elton took it

so for granted that his Richard was never to disappoint his expectations that he said,

"You do n't seem to think it possible that I shall fall into temptation and sin at college."

"It is true that I feel very sure you will do yourself and me credit; yet more: that you will honor the Saviour whose name we both confess."

"Why do you trust me so? If I betray your confidence I shall be the most ungrateful of wretches! My very horror of ever doing so makes me tremble lest I may."

"If you were self-confident and forgetful of Christ, Richard, I should tremble for you, however high your standing in deportment and scholarship. If you were careless in your conduct and lazy over your books I should not put much trust in your professions or even your prayers. While you continue, as now, to work and watch and pray, you will be delivered from evil."

"Thank you for such encouragement. Yet I am a little afraid of absence from you at college, where so many fall who have stood previously, and whose friends were as confident of them as you are of me."

"College is a place of temptation, Richard. Satan wishes to make it his school, as he does every institution of education; but the most of those who fall there have taken many lessons of

him and his assistants in those primary schools of evil which so nearly proved your ruin, yet have never, like you, turned from the power of Satan to God by repentance and faith in him, who alone can uphold and save."

"I will try to make college Christ's school to me." Dick said it very thoughtfully and earnestly.

"It will prove Christ's school, Richard, to every one who loves and serves him there."

We must leave Dick now. If we follow him to college in his freshman year we shall find him with Ernest as a classmate. Willy's home is with his father in the place where the university is situated, so that Dick has him for his dearest friend while Willy finishes fitting himself to enter the next year.

In bidding Dick this reluctant adieu, we feel, with Mr. Elton, that we can trust him, not because of his many noble traits of character, but because his feet are firmly placed upon the Rock, Christ Jesus, against which the fiercest tempests of Satan's temptation and Satan's rage must ever alike be broken.

